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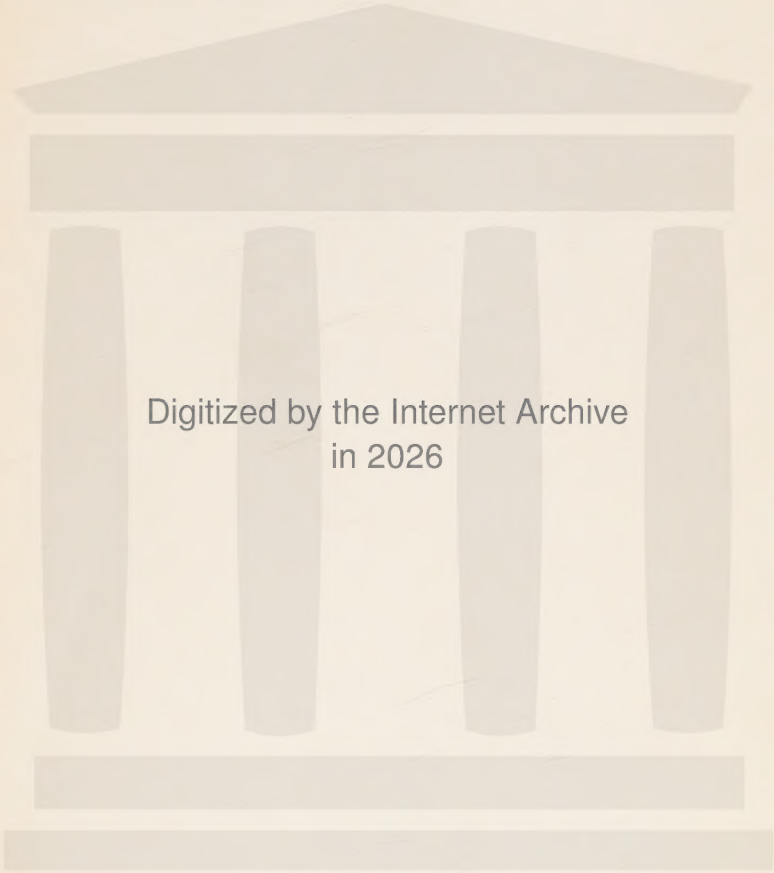
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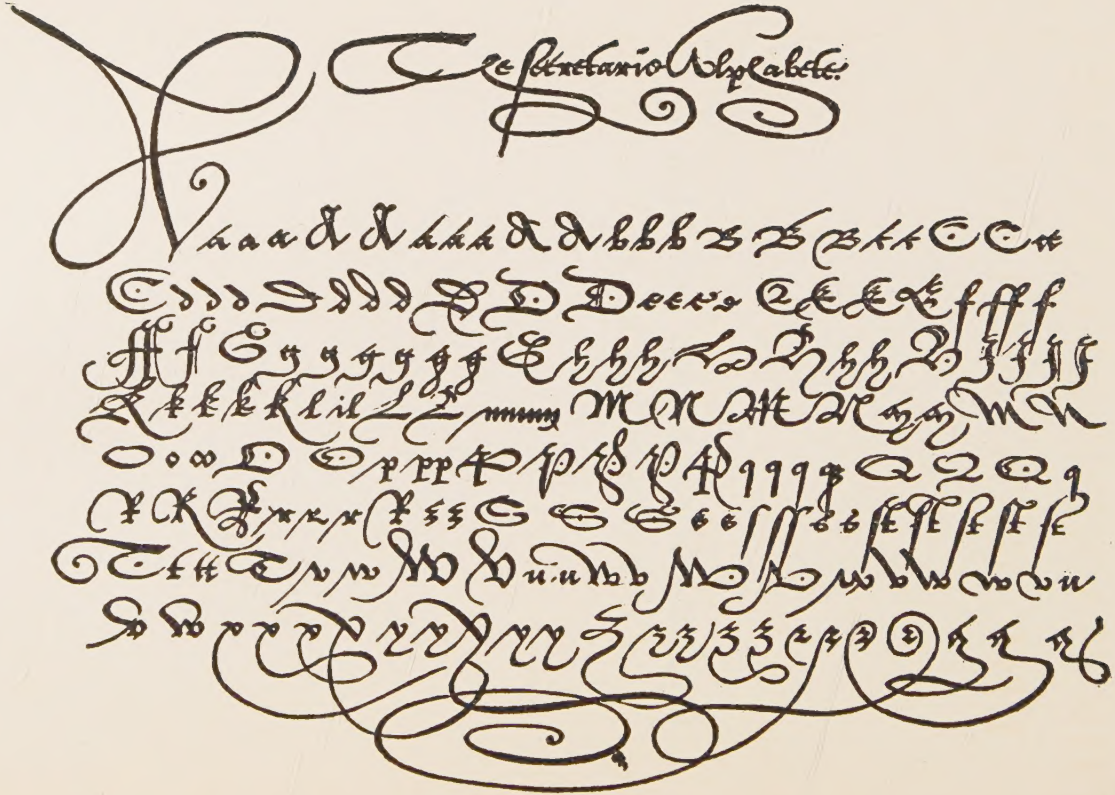
THE HANDWRITING OF THE RENAISSANCE



The Secretary Alphabet, 1571

THE HANDWRITING OF THE RENAISSANCE

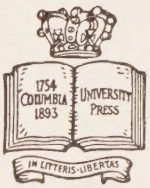
By SAMUEL A. TANNENBAUM

Being *the* Development *and* Characteristics *of the* Script *of* Shakspere's Time

With an Introduction *by* Ashley H. Thorndike

Can you read anything you see?
Ay, if I know the letters and the language.
Romeo and Juliet, I, ii.

NEW YORK



MCMXXX

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TO MY GOOD FRIEND

JOSEPH QUINCY ADAMS

WHO SUGGESTED MY WRITING

THIS BOOK

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INTRODUCTION

This book might never have come into existence had it not been for a controversy of considerable proportions over Shakspere's handwriting. The book indeed owes something to the very scholars with whom its author has been most at odds, for it was this group of English scholars who first called our attention to the necessity of a close knowledge of Elizabethan handwriting and printing for the sound editing of Shaksperian and other Elizabethan texts. To a cautious American like myself, it seemed that their enthusiasm led them a little too fast and far in applying their new-found knowledge to the solution of Shaksperian problems, and I was among the first to welcome Dr. Tannenbaum's penetrating and sometimes devastating criticism. But he would, I know, join with me in expressing appreciation of the brilliant initiative which has already opened the way to significant developments in textual study.

The need of a compact and well illustrated manual on Elizabethan handwriting has become obvious to all literary students, and they will thank Dr. Tannenbaum for the enormous labor and pains which he has given to their service. I believe that the book should also prove useful to students in other fields of the Renaissance and especially to all concerned with documents of that period.

I may venture to add a personal word in admiration of the author's extraordinary energy and versatility. He is a practicing physician, specializing in mental disorders, and yet for many years he has also been a Shaksperian student and collector and a highly qualified expert in handwriting. When certain theories were advanced as to Shakspere's handwriting, Dr. Tannenbaum naturally joined eagerly in a research which gave free play for both of his avocations. He was able to make most important contributions to the study of Elizabethan manuscripts because he was the first to apply to them the technique of modern experts in handwriting. No doubt such application

of modern methods will be extended widely in paleography. Some of the results of Dr. Tannenbaum's investigations brought him into conflict with many authorities and especially with Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, who had attempted to identify as Shakspere's the handwriting of certain pages in the manuscript of the old and anonymous play, *Sir Thomas Moore;* but Dr. Tannenbaum has long been known by many non-controversial studies, and more recently by his annual bibliographies and by his ardent and indefatigable interest in all kinds of Elizabethan research. This volume is another witness of his zeal in the service of his fellow students.

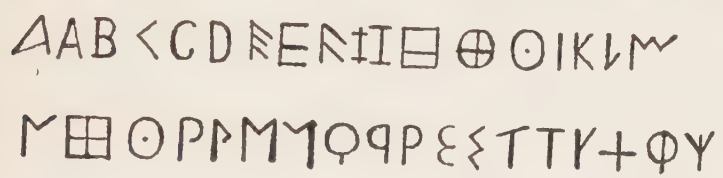
Ashley H. Thorndike

THE HANDWRITING OF THE RENAISSANCE

Chapter I

THE RENAISSANCE SCRIPT

About twenty-eight hundred years ago — half a century more or less either way does not matter — some adventurous Greeks broke up their homes in the vicinity of ancient Chalcis, in Euboea, and set out in quest of new homes. Wind and wave took them, we may conjecture, through the Strait of Messina and up the Tyrrhenian Sea. Attracted by the promontory which commands what is now known as "the beautiful Bay



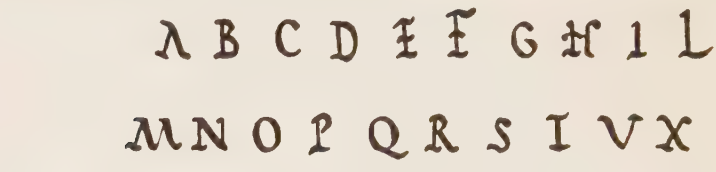
1. Pelasgic Script

of Naples," but which then had no name, the adventurers disembarked, set up their tents, and founded the colony of Cumae. The place afforded every natural advantage that man could wish for, and the colony, the earliest Greek settlement in Italy, prospered and became the focus from which Greek culture radiated to the aboriginal races of Italy. Among the most valuable possessions of these wanderers — though in all probability they themselves did not regard it as an asset of much importance — was a script alphabet for the writing of books, an alphabet which modern writers call the Pelasgic (see Alphabet 1), the script of the earliest settlers of Greece. This book alphabet is of the utmost importance to us, for from it were obtained, by successive modifications, all the subsequent Italian (Latin) alphabets. It is a derivative of this alphabet which in time became the alphabet of Latin Christendom and

the literary alphabet of Europe and of America, and which is slowly, but noticeably, making its way into books printed in German, Russian, Asiatic, and even barbarous African languages.

The successive steps in the evolution from the Pelasgic script to the modern Roman hand are not always so clearly traceable as we should like to have them, but, on the whole, we can follow them throughout the centuries with a fair degree of certainty.

To begin with, the student must remember that the earliest books that have come down to us are written wholly in capital letters and look like modern printed books, the letters being



2. Rustic Capitals

perpendicular and not linked to one another. The use of capitals in the making of books, being a slow, tedious, and expensive matter, was destined to be abandoned in time in favor of a mode of writing which would be more speedy and more economical. In what follows we shall trace briefly the progress from the one to the other.

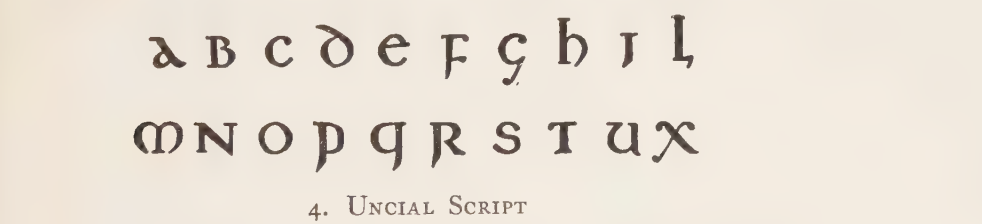
One of the oldest written books in existence in a Latin alphabet is the famous Codex Romanus, a copy of Virgil's *Aeneid*, preserved in the Vatican. It is estimated that this was written in the third century A.D. The letters are angular, square, irregular, and formed of broken strokes with circumflex finals (see Alphabet 2). This script, designated Rustic or Negligent Capitals, continued in fashion till the sixth or seventh century, but was not abandoned till the ninth.

Some earlier codices — for example, the fragmentary St. Gall *Virgil* (assigned to the fourth or fifth century) — are written in a style of script known as Square Capitals, *Scriptura*

elegans (see Alphabet 3). In this simple, direct, and easily legible script, borrowed from inscriptions on tombs, the letters are square and angular; except *F*, *L*, and *Q*, all are of the same height; the letters are composed almost wholly of vertical and horizontal lines; "the external angles are invariably right angles, and the curves regular and symmetrical."

3. Square Capitals

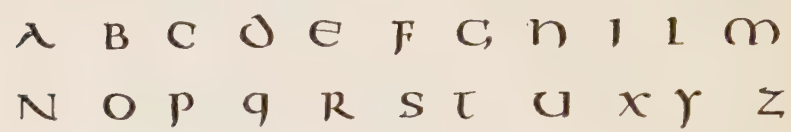
Even while this script was still new, there were scribes who were beginning to write a slightly different style, an Uncial script which is depicted in Alphabet 4. The main characteristics of this script, constituted of capital letters, are two: (1) a slight inclination of the vertical strokes and (2) a tendency to roundness, especially in the letters *A*, *D*, *E*, *H*, *M*, and *U*, which, but for their size, the *A* only excepted, might almost be



4. Uncial Script

regarded as minuscules. This hand, clear and legible, fully developed in the fourth or fifth century, was employed as a book hand for Latin rolls and codices from the sixth century to the ninth, when the Minuscular hand, which had meanwhile been developing, displaced it just as it itself had displaced Rustic Capitals. Before dismissing the early Roman uncial we must note that it anticipated the minuscules not only in the shape of the letters *A*, *D*, *E*, *H*, *M*, and *U*, but also in the tend-

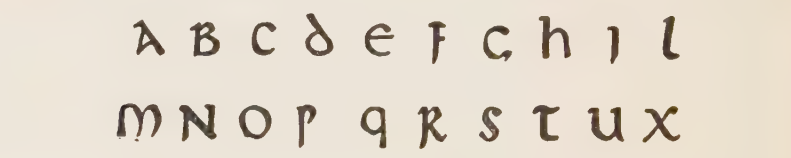
ency of certain letters (*D*, *F*, *G*, *H*, *L*, *P*, *Q*, and, sometimes, *R*) to go above or below the line. This tendency, seen here for the first time, is of great importance, for it is probably this characteristic which brought about the deviation from the perpendicular and so facilitated further progress towards our cursive writing. A fine example of this script is to be seen in the Vati-



5. Uncial Letters (Sixth Century)

can library's palimpsest of Cicero's *De republica*, written, it is estimated, in the third century.

The Roman uncial, still a lapidary script and unsuitable for rapid writing, attained full perfection in the seventh century and may be studied in St. Augustine's copy of the Gospels, preserved in the library of Corpus Christi College at Cambridge,



6. Roman Uncial Script

England.* Many of the letters (see Alphabet 5) have minuscular forms and are quite rounded, especially *a*, *c*, *d*, *e*, *g*, *h*, *m*, and *u*.

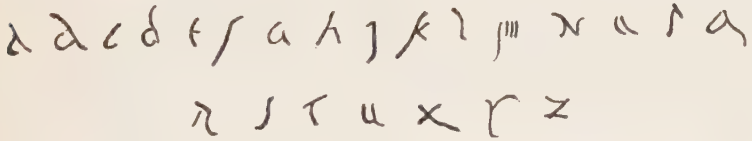
But it must not be supposed, from what has preceded, that the ancient Latins had no cursive hand for use for correspondence and other ordinary purposes.† A fortunate discovery (in

* It is thought highly probable that this venerable codex is the very book which St. Augustine brought from Rome when Pope Gregory sent him and forty monks to convert the Saxon heathens.

† The main characteristics of a cursive hand are a tendency "to increase the breadth and to diminish the height of the letters, and more especially so to modify their forms as to make it easy to unite them by ligatures." (Taylor, *The Alphabet*, I, 287.)

1875) of some wax tablets (*libelli*) at Pompeii proves that by A.D. 55 and 56 a Roman Cursive (see Alphabet 7), older than the uncial book hand, was in use for letters and business purposes. It will be noted that in this "loose and straggling" script the letters *d* and *a* might, if carelessly written, the loop of the *a* being rounded, become indistinguishable. Inasmuch as Suetonius says that Julius Caesar wrote *d* instead of *a*, it is inferred that Caesar wrote this script. There is something like corroboration for this inference in the discovery of cursive abecedaria scratched on tiles — a circumstance which makes it probable that cursive writing was regularly taught by Roman schoolmasters.

This old Roman cursive, of which there are very few specimens in existence, is of great historical importance, for it helps



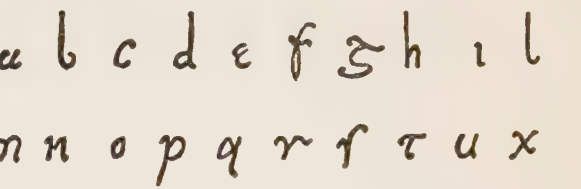
7. Roman Cursive Script

to explain the origin of modern scripts, several of our minuscular letters being directly traceable to the forms found in the Pompeian *libelli*. When this script — "loose, irregular, scratchy, and difficult to read" — was formalized, it became the ordinary diplomatic hand of Italy and France, in use till about the ninth century. Then it was replaced by the Lombardic (a medieval script of Italy, which reached its greatest excellence in the eleventh century) and Caroline Minuscules, which were themselves indirectly derived from it at a somewhat earlier period.* It may be mentioned, as a curious illustration of how a style of penmanship may degenerate, that this old hand — the early Roman cursive — had become so illegible by the thirteenth century that Emperor Frederick II prohibited its further use.

* The main characteristics of a minuscular script are a reduction in the size of the letters and an increased tendency for the letters to pass above or below a base line.

At this point in our calligraphic history we must leave the continental scripts and examine those of the British Isles, for these exerted a tremendous influence on the subsequent development of our modern handwriting. It is no exaggeration to say that the material prosperity of the Anglo-Saxon peoples, making for the spread of education, is largely responsible for the many excellencies, especially compactness and speed, which characterize the Roman script and which seem destined to make it ultimately the script of the whole civilized world.

Regarding an Irish script prior to the sixth century we know nothing. But in the sixth century we find the Irish monks

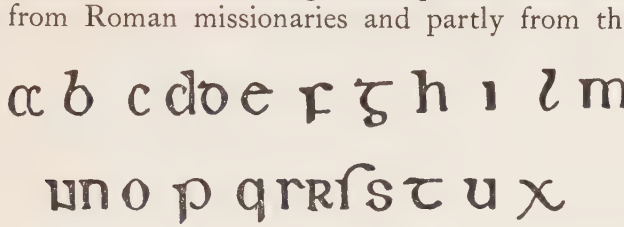


8. Early Irish Script

writing an uncial book hand of remarkable beauty, the most magnificent of all medieval scripts. This script, uncial or semiuncial in character, resembles the uncial scripts of the Continent to such an extent as to make it certain that it had a continental origin, notwithstanding that it differs essentially from the continental alphabets in the structure of many of the letters. Its history is obscure. The likelihood is, however, that in the fifth century St. Patrick (A.D. 373?–463?) on his return to Ireland took with him from the south of France a fully formed uncial hand (Alphabet 8) which was later cultivated and modified in the Irish monasteries. A beautiful specimen of this perfected Irish script (see Alphabet 9) is shown in the Book of Kells, now in Dublin, written in the seventh century. The hand from which this is supposed to have developed is the French Uncial of the fourth century, a fine specimen of which (see Alphabet 10) appears in the St. Hilary Codex, preserved in the archives of St. Peter's at Rome. When the Irish monks sub-

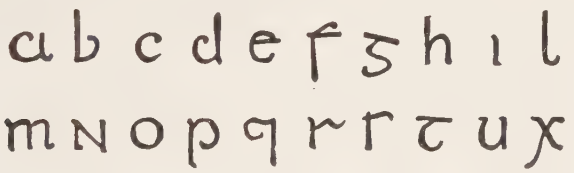
sequently crossed over to the Continent, founding monasteries in Germany, France, Switzerland, and Italy, their fine alphabet and their style of ornamentation in turn exerted a pronounced influence on the calligraphic schools of those countries.

The Anglo-Saxons (Old English) acquired the art of writing partly from Roman missionaries and partly from the Irish.



9. Perfected Irish Script

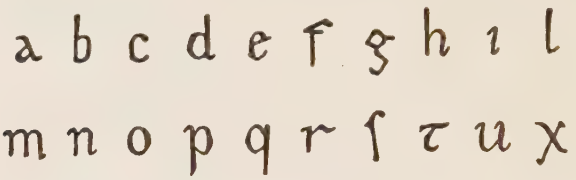
Their script is therefore a combination of Roman and Irish scripts with an admixture of some extraneous characters, the runes wen (ƿ) and thorn (þ) being traceable to Greek influence. This rounded book hand, developed on British soil in the seventh and eighth centuries, was the precursor of the Caroline



10. French Uncial Script (Fourth Century)

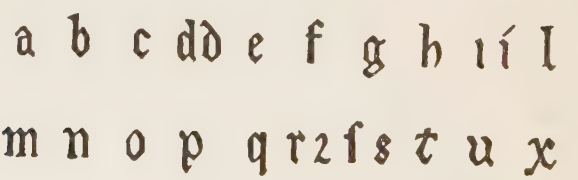
minuscule and consequently the progenitor of the Roman alphabet in which almost all our books are printed. This reform, the last important stage in the evolution of our alphabet, came about through the influence of the many-sided Alcuin of York (A.D. 735–804) at the court of Charlemagne. The new script (see Alphabet 11), obtained mainly from the English book hand, with the addition of certain elements from the Lombardic minuscule and the Roman uncial, grew rapidly in favor and displaced the older scripts current throughout Europe.

This script reached its greatest perfection at the end of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth. Its popularity was undoubtedly due to the facts that it could be written rapidly, the letters were compact, it was easily read, it did not tire the eyes, and with it much could be written on a page. It was cheap as well as practical.



11. Carolingian Minuscule

But, excellent though this style of penmanship was, it soon met with serious reverses. It began to deteriorate, to lose its uncial character, its roundness, almost as soon as it had reached its highest perfection. As early as the eleventh century, scribes in northern France began to write some of the letters, especially *a*, *b*, *d*, *e*, *g*, *h*, *m*, *n*, *o*, *p*, *r*, and *u*, so angularly (see Alphabet 12)



12. Gothic Minuscule

that it justifies the German epithet *gitterförmig* (resembling a picket fence) which is so often applied to it. Italian scholars of the fifteenth century, by which time this hand had undergone still further degeneration, dubbed it contemptuously "the Gothic script" — not because it had any connection with the Goths (a Germanic race which overran the Roman Empire in the third and fourth centuries), but because of its angularity, its similarity in this respect to the pointed arch which was the

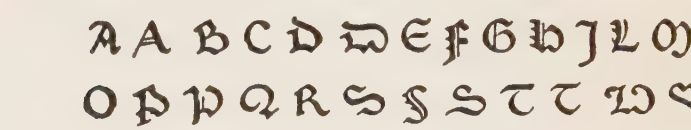
main characteristic of medieval (Gothic) architecture, prevalent in Europe from about 1200 to about 1500. In general, the term Gothic was applied to anything post-Roman — that is, medieval. Notwithstanding the many disadvantages of this script, it continued in use, in an almost infinite variety of forms, on the Continent and in England, throughout the Renaissance, till it was ousted by the Italic script which resulted from a return to the Caroline minuscule of the eleventh century. It is the description and the analysis of this difficult and unbeautiful Gothic script — in which most of the literary treasures of the Renaissance were written — that concern us in this book.

The Gothic script of the twelfth century and after, especially as written in England, may be divided into two main classes: Text Hand and Court Hand. The Court Hand was the free, hurriedly written, informal hand which was used by all and sundry for business and social purposes, as well as by the clerks of courts for ordinary legal documents. Text (Book) Hand was the stiff, formal, precise, slowly written hand employed in the making of books and for headings in informal documents. Between the twelfth century and the fourteenth, the court hand was the same in England as on the Continent, as regards both the Set Hand and the Free Hands, the former being the ideal informal script (that is, the hand as it ought to have been written, as writing masters taught it); the latter, the hands actually written for ordinary everyday purposes. The distinguishing features of the set hand were neatness and regularity.

During the latter half of the fourteenth century the court hand had developed, both in England and abroad, a variety of Gothic script to which writing masters have given the name Bastard Script, the inelegant adjective being applied to it because it represented a compromise between the formal text hand and the informal free hands. It is a set hand and yet not a book hand. Without going into details, it may be said that during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries almost every sec-

tion of Europe, even Italy, had several varieties of bastard script.*

From the bastard hand of the late fourteenth century there developed in England two distinct varieties of Gothic script: (1) a small Court Hand and (2) several large Special Hands. The former came into being early in the fifteenth century and gave rise, a century later, to the hand generally known as the English Secretary (Old English) which subsequently fused with the new Italian hand to make the Mixed or Round Hand of the seventeenth century. The large special hands emerged late in the fifteenth century and were restricted to use for certain sections of public and private business. These hands — which the



Gutenberg Type (Fifteenth Century)

student will find fully described and depicted in Mr. Hilary Jenkinson's *Later Court Hands* — have been named Engrossing, Chancery, King's Remembrancer, Pipe Office, Legal, Common Pleas, Lord Treasurer's, etc. It may be added that these special hands, all court hands, are peculiar to England, though they differ from continental bastard hands only in style, in mode of execution, not in any essential characteristics. All these hands were in use during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James. During this time there developed in England almost as many free hands as there were persons writing.

The invention of printing exerted, as might be expected, a profound influence on the subsequent development of penmanship. Johann Gutenberg, generally regarded as the inventor of movable type, took as the model for the (Black Letter) type employed in the earliest printed books the Gothic script

* Specimens of these variations of the twelfth century Gothic script are shown in Crous and Kirchner's *Die gotischen Schriftarten*, 1928.

of the missals written by German monks. Roman type was first employed in a book (*The Epistles of Cicero*) printed at Rome in 1467. The French printed a book with the new (round) type in 1470; but the English made no use of it till 1520. Though Roman type had come into general use in England by 1570–1580, the Elizabethans were printing many of their secular books in black letter, reserving the Roman type for quotations from foreign languages, for proper names, and for certain important words — exactly as they were writing in their manuscripts, for example, in *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* (Harl. MS. 7368), fol. 13*a*.

It was just about the time when the English were getting their first acquaintance with the printers' Roman type that a variety of script, a small set hand, known as the Secretary Hand, was becoming prominent in England. This hand, seen in all the countries of Europe and in all kinds of documents, followed the letter forms of the large bastard hand, but almost wholly dispensed with its exaggerated angles and long tapering strokes. It is interesting to note that this script is the direct ancestor of the Gothic script still current in Germany. Great interest attaches to this hand not only because it was the finest of the free hands developed from the bastard Gothic, but that with it were written all the greatest products of the age of Elizabeth. It is depicted and named in John Baildon and Jehan de Beauchesne's *A Book Containing Diverse Sortes of Handes*, 1571, the first book on handwriting in the English tongue.

Regarding the name of this variety of script (see Frontispiece), it may be said that in the medieval period the word "secretary" meant a confidential servant who attended to his master's or mistress's private correspondence, but that for some time after the publication of Baildon's book the word was applied only to "whatever might be the popular variety at the moment of the small *Set Hand* which was ordinarily used by ordinary people" (H. Jenkinson).

As, with increasing wealth and education, the quantity of

writing and the number of writers increased, the quality of the writing deteriorated. Speed necessarily produces this effect. Indications of this deviation from the prescribed patterns of the letters are best seen in the development of subvarieties of secretary — for example, Engrossing Secretary, Upright Secretary, Rapid Secretary, and Splayed Secretary. Some hands of the Elizabethan era are so bad — for example, that of the poet John Day — that it is almost impossible to read them.

But a change for the better was coming. In the fifteenth century, Italian scholars, dissatisfied with the ungainly and almost illegible Gothic script, resurrected the Caroline minuscule of the eleventh century, gave it an inclination to the right, and introduced connecting ties between the strokes constituting the essential parts of the letters (for example, *m*, *n*, *u*) and links between adjoining letters. This modified Caroline minuscule, constituting the essential basis of our modern Roman hand, is known as the Italian *Cancelleresca* (because it was officially adopted — in 1431 — by the Papal Chancery). It is said, on fairly reliable evidence, that Petrarch's beautiful writing of this script supplied Francesco da Bologna with the model for the semicursive type (the Aldine) which he cut for Aldus Manutius for the *Aeneid* he printed at Venice in 1501.

Pari passu with the development of printing, the new Italic script was finding more or less ready acceptance in a number of European countries. In England, whither it is said to have been introduced by Petrus Carmelianus, Latin Secretary to King Henry VII, its adoption was very slow, but not so slow as in Germany, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden. The main reason for this backwardness was probably the fashionable requirement to write the "new" script (derived mainly from the rounded English book hand of the eighth century) beautifully — and therefore slowly. Be this as it may, by the middle of the sixteenth century the Italic hand — the "sweet Roman hand" referred to by Shakspere — had made itself sufficiently felt in England for professional scriveners and the well-educated there to learn to write it, even if only for ceremonious and for-

mal epistles and for signatures in documents and letters written in secretary. But the new hand was steadily creeping into favor. Towards the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century many educated men in England, especially those of university standing, and littérateurs were writing the Italic hand with skill and even for ordinary purposes. In dramatic manuscripts of the last decade of the sixteenth century, and even in the first half of the seventeenth century, we find the author or the "book-keeper" of a theatrical company, and even professional copyists, writing stage directions, the names of the *dramatis personae*, titles, and foreign language quotations (especially Latin ones) in the new hand, though the dialogue was uniformly written in secretary. At this period men like Sir Francis Bacon and their amanuenses were still writing their letters in secretary but their signatures in Italic.* After this, however, penmen used the Italic hand more and more, usually in combination with the secretary, the letters of the two hands being mingled in various proportions. This was carried to such an extent by some writers of the first quarter of the seventeenth century — Ben Jonson, for example — that it is sometimes difficult to say whether a given document is written in secretary or in Italic, especially as penmen writing both scripts took the liberty to modify the individual letters of each with peculiarities of the other. During the remainder of the century the Gothic secretary was gradually being abandoned, and the Italic, with some slight modifications, was steadily taking its place. Since then the English have been writing only some variety of Roman hand, though some of their continental neighbors are still writing a modified black letter.

* Mr. Jenkinson says that in England Italic signatures begin in 1554.

Chapter II

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

To facilitate the description of the variformed Gothic script it will be well to proceed from certain general ideas derived from a study of our own modern Roman hand.

The letters of our written alphabet may be divided into four classes with reference to their relationship to a real or imagined line — the base line — on which the penman is (or is supposed to be) writing. We distinguish four varieties of letters:

1. *Linear letters*, that is, the small letters (minuscules) *a*, *c*, *e*, *i*, *m*, *n*, *o*, *r*, *s*, *u*, *v*, *w*, and *x*, which are written on the line and go only a short distance (about an eighth of an inch) above it. In the secretary script the linear letters were *a*, *c*, *e*, *i*, *m*, *n*, *o*, *r*, *u*, and a variety of *x*. There are no capitals (majuscules) in this class.

2. *Supralinear letters*, that is, *b*, *d*, *h*, *k*, *l*, and *t*, which go a considerable distance (a quarter of an inch or more) above the line. In the secretary hand the supralinear letters were *b*, *c*, *d*, *k*, *l*, *s*, *t*, *v*, and *w*, as well as certain varieties of *a* and *h*. These letters were not all of a size; the *a*, *t*, *v*, and *w* went only a very short distance above the linear letters. Most of the old capital letters belong to this class.

3. *Infralinear letters*, that is, *g*, *j*, *p*, *q*, *y*, and *z*, which go a considerable distance (about a quarter of an inch) below the line. In the secretary hand these letters were *g*, *h*, *i*, (*j*), *p*, *q*, *r*, *x*, *y*, and *z*. The only capitals in this class are *X* and *Y*.

4. *Double-length letters*, such as our *f*, which go a considerable distance above and below the line. In the secretary alphabet these letters were the following: *f*, *h*, *s*, *G*, *H*, *I* (*J*), *P*, *X*, *Y*, and *Z*.

It is evident from the above that some letters were written in several ways and belong to more than one class.

The description of the letters of the alphabet will be further facilitated if we will think of them as being made up of straight lines, curves, and dots. The straight lines entering into the letters are either horizontal, perpendicular, or oblique; the curves are segments either of a right-handed or of a left-handed circle. A right-handed curve may be defined as one which is made (from above downward or from below upward) in the direction in which the hands of the clock move; a left-handed curve is one which is made in the opposite direction, that is, counter-clockwise. Thus, for example, our *O* is made up of left-handed curves. A curve may be simple or compound. The latter is often described as "wavy" or "waved."

The linear letters are made up chiefly of short vertical lines (minims), ovals or ellipses, semiovals, diagonal or horizontal connecting strokes (links, ties), horizontal crossbars, loops, hooks, bows, tails, and angles.

Ovals or ellipses may be closed (as in our *o*) or incomplete (as in our *c*); they may be closed or open at the top. These ovals occur mainly in the small or "lower-case" letters (minuscules). Capitals are more likely to be made up of larger curves which may be roughly described as "semicircles."

Linking strokes are either horizontal (as in passing from our *o* to an *i*) or diagonal (as in passing from our *d* to a succeeding *i*). In the secretary hand the tie often had a small decorative bow or a tiny circle at either end or at both ends and was as likely to be vertical as horizontal. Arbitrarily we may say that "links" connect adjoining letters and that "ties" connect parts of a letter.

In our modern script a crossbar occurs only in the *t;* but in the secretary hand short horizontal bars occurred also in the small *c*, *f*, and *g*, and sometimes even in the *a*. In majuscules they occurred in the *A*, *F*, *J*, *K*, *P*, and *R;* occasionally they occur even in other letters.

Vertical loops, occurring both above the line (as in our

normal, perfectly made *b*) and below the line (as in our normal, perfectly made *g*), are usually regarded as constituting the "stems" of the letters of which they are a part. The supralinear loops are made by a light (unshaded), slightly curved ascending stroke and a heavier, slightly more curved descending stroke meeting above in a narrow curve. If the penman leaves no space between the ascending and the descending strokes, the loop is said to be "blind."

In the case of infralinear loops the essential element is the down stroke (the heavy descender). The ascending stroke of this loop may be omitted wholly, or it may be represented by a small right-handed hook at the bottom of the descender, or by a sinuous (winding) tail below the line. Some penmen generally provided a sinuous tail (as well as a terminal descender) which did or did not link with the succeeding letter.

The transition from one stroke to another within a letter takes place by means of an elliptical curve or an acute angle. In the secretary hand the acute angle was a more constant characteristic than in our Italic script.

The striking individual characteristics of the bastard hand of the fifteenth century, a century after this system of writing had become definitely established, were the following:

1. The bodies of the linear minuscules were rather smaller than those of today, but somewhat larger than in previous centuries.

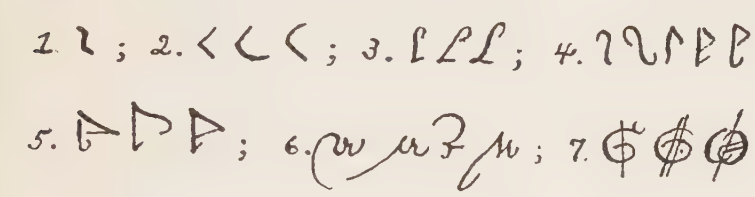
2. The stems of the tall letters were almost perpendicular and supposedly parallel; but in actual practice this parallelism was more or less conspicuously absent, and yet the writing as a whole had a fair degree of regularity and precision.

3. Certain letters, especially *f* and long *s*, and not infrequently *p*, *g*, and *r*, had long tapering strokes going well below the line. Many penmen habitually made these strokes very heavy in the shaft and then tapered them off to a fine point; others terminated them bluntly a short distance below the line. The blunt-pointed heavy *f* and long *s* were more likely to be almost perpendicular.

4. Most writers were careful not to let their ascenders and descenders encroach on the lines above and below them. This gave the writing an appearance of clarity.

5. Most of the letters — even, for example, *o* — were made with several strokes, that is, with one or more pen-lifts. Because of this chiefly, the bodies of the letters consist of more or less straight lines and give an impression of angularity.

6. Few letters in a word were written continuously, that is, currently, without pen-lifts. Hence many documents look as if they had been "printed." Notwithstanding this, many letters were written conjointly (see Chapter IV). Mainly be-



cause of this peculiarity, although the absence of fine connecting strokes between the minims of certain letters contributed to producing this effect, the writing looked cramped and huddled ("squeezed").

7. Vertical strokes, especially the minims of the letters *i*, *m*, *n*, and *u*, were written so that the upper end of each leaned over to the left and the lower end to the right, the deviation making an obtuse angle with the perpendicular stem (No. 1) — a conspicuous characteristic, by the way, of the black letter too.

8. The round back of each of a large number of the letters, minuscules as well as majuscules, was replaced by two straight or curved strokes meeting in an obtuse angle (No. 2).

9. Many of the letters, small and capital, were provided with a short, horizontal foot, straight or curved, which sometimes projected slightly to the left of the stem (No. 3).

10. An angular or rounded hook was often added to the head or the foot — and sometimes to both — of a long vertical stroke (No. 4).

11. In the hands of many penmen we find a decided hook, made by one or two long, heavy straight strokes, to the right and at the head of a tall stroke, especially in the letters *b*, *k*, and *l*. This hook undoubtedly represents the right side of what should have been the looped stem of the letter involved. More than likely this hook was made from above downward (No. 5); not infrequently it curves slightly and terminates with a fine point towards the left.

12. Many writers had a habit of beginning certain letters, especially *m*, *n*, *v*, and *w*, with a straight or curved, short or long, infralinear or supralinear, starting stroke (No. 6).

13. Ever since the twelfth century, a capital letter was not infrequently decorated with one or two perpendicular or oblique strokes through the middle. Now and then these strokes stopped short of the base line, but most of the time they went below it. Some writers made these strokes very heavy, but as a rule they were made with hardly any pen pressure. They are of a purely ornamental nature, wholly superfluous, and should not be mistaken for the stems or backbones of the letters. Not a few fantastic penmen decorated a capital letter with one, two, three, or even four fine horizontal or oblique strokes going from the vertical bisector to either or both sides of the majuscule (No. 7).

14. Another rather common ornamental feature of a capital letter was the addition of a dot, light or heavy, round or square, in one or other of its loops. Rarely two dots were employed in script; in the printed black letter two dots were common. These otiose dots survived till almost the very end of the eighteenth century. They are shown in John Ayres's textbook, *A Tutor to Penmanship*, 1695.

But it must not be supposed that all these features were present in every specimen of fourteenth or fifteenth century bastard writing; different specimens show them in varying proportions. Individual penmen, writing various styles of bastard, did not always show the same characteristics or in the same proportions; in other words, their styles often got mixed.

When we come to the fully developed secretary hand of the sixteenth century, we find, as was to be expected, that the fifteenth century bastard hand had undergone considerable modification in some of its essentials. The alterations we have to take cognizance of are the following:

1. The bodies of the minuscules are, on the whole, somewhat smaller.

2. The writing is not quite so angular: *i*, *m*, *n*, and *u* are not infrequently written with curves between the light connecting strokes and the heavy minims. This tendency to roundness in the minuscules appears also in other letters — for example, *a*, *d*, and *o*.

3. The shafts of the *f*, *p*, and long *s*, etc., do not, as a rule, go so far below the line; but exceptionally one comes across a penman who made these tapering shafts an inch and more long. Shakspere did so in the *p* of one of his extant signatures written in the seventeenth century. It is not at all unusual to find writers who sometimes made these infralinear shafts short and stubby, and at other times long and tapering. "D," the celebrated author of the fine revision of the insurrection scene in the much discussed *Booke of Sir Thomas Moore*, made them short on one page and long on another.

4. In ordinary, everyday documents the writing slants to the right much more than it was wont to do. This is as true of the supralinear stems as of the infralinear ones. But there were really two main varieties of secretary in general use during Queen Elizabeth's reign: one perpendicular and one oblique. In the former the bodies of the minuscules were rather large, in the latter quite small. The perpendicular variety, the invention of Robert Granjon, a type founder of Lyons, had been adopted by the printer Plantin, of Antwerp, and became known as *Caractères de Civilité*. It is to be seen in a number of printed books and in many beautifully engrossed manuscripts. The sloping secretary outlived the Granjon variety because it could be written much more rapidly.

5. The individual letters are almost all written *currente calamo*, that is, without pen-lifts.

6. Adjoining letters are not only conjoined much more than previously but linked to one another to such an extent that often even long words, as *humannitie*, are written without a pen-lift, especially if the writer made no *i*-dots. This gives the writing an appearance of ease and fluency.

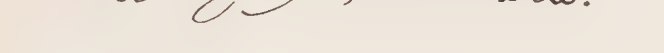
7. The individual letters are better proportioned and much more graceful, so that a great deal of the writing is really beautiful. This effect is to some extent due to the very marked contrast between heavy descenders and very fine diagonal connecting strokes. Artistic shading is much easier with properly cut quill pens than with our hard and inelastic steel pens.

8. Except in "engrossing" secretary and in certain special hands, used for certain formal documents, the angulation of vertical strokes (in *h*, *k*, *l*, *m*, *n*, etc.) has almost completely disappeared.

The normal or prescribed forms of the letters were, of course, no more adhered to by the everyday penman than they are now. Every age has its scribblers. Even professional scribes introduced individual variations into the products of their pens. In many instances these deviations from the normal or copy-book patterns disguise and distort the letters so effectively that it is almost impossible to recognize them. Fortunately it is possible to reduce most of these individual variations to certain general principles which will greatly aid the student in deciphering almost any document of the period under discussion. These principles, formulated now for the first time, are as follows:

1. The stems of the supralinear letters, *b*, *h*, *k*, *l*, and *t*, were often indented in their downward course (No. 1). This was done by drawing the pen a very short distance to the right before the stem reached the base line, turning around, and drawing the pen down to the line. Some penmen did this

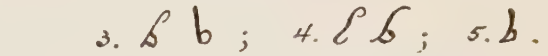
roundingly and others angularly. When writers first began to do this it would be difficult to say; but the phenomenon may be seen in some of the letters written by King Henry V. A very remarkable and interesting example of it occurs in a German specimen from the fifteenth century (shown in Plate 36 of Crous and Kirchner's *Die gotischen Schriftarten*). Some writers distorted in this manner all their supralinear letters. Ignorance of this fact has caused some modern writers to brand Shakspere as an illiterate and others to excuse his "bad" penmanship (which was not bad at all) on the ground of writer's cramp or some other alleged disabling disease of the nervous system.



2. "Spurs" were a striking feature in the handwriting of some penmen of this period. The spur was usually a single or a double stroke, straight or curved, just above and just to the left of minuscular *a* or *c* (No. 1); sometimes it joined the letter and sometimes it did not. Some writers call the long, straight or curved, upstrokes with which many Elizabethan and Jacobean penmen, lay and professional, began certain of their letters, especially *m*, *n*, *u*, *v*, and *w*, "spurs." Sometimes an infralinear spur, which might occur even in the middle of a word, was an inch and more long. But there was another variety of spur in Elizabethan secretary which calls for consideration. This occurs chiefly in the letters *a* and *o*, although it is found also in the letters *b*, *k*, and *l*; it was made by turning the lower end of the back of the letter sharply to the left (No. 2).

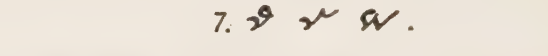
3. In the supralinear looped letters, *b*, *h*, *k*, *l*, and *t*, it was the custom with many writers to omit the light ascending stroke constituting the right side of the letter and serving as a connecting link with the preceding letter. Most writers who did this retained the upper part of the ascender in the shape of a hook. On the whole, this tended to make the writing clearer and neater. In the infralinear looped letters, *g*, *j*, *p*, and *z*, it

was the custom to omit or shorten the returning upstroke of the loop.



4. Elizabethan writers had apparently unlimited license in the matter of modifying their letters. The calligraphic "tricks" resorted to in giving individuality to one's penmanship were many. One of these consisted in converting the normally or exaggeratedly curved convex stem of the supralinear letters (*b*, *h*, *k*, *l*) into an oblique straight stroke (No. 3), into a compound stroke (No. 4), into an indented stroke (*vide supra*), or even into a concave stroke (No. 5).

5. Strokes that should have been simple, straight or curved, perpendicular or oblique, were curved in the opposite direction, provided with a loop above or (and) below, waved or indented, and flourished at the top or at the bottom (No. 6). Horizontal strokes were treated in a similar manner.



6. Angles were often replaced by curves or bows, and curves by angles (No. 7).

7. Not infrequently letters which should have terminated on the line went down below it and were there tricked out with unnecessary tails; and letters which normally should have gone considerably below the line were terminated at the base line — for example, a certain variety of *H*.

8. The most effective distortion of the secretary letters was accomplished by a wanton modification of the descending left-handed semicircle constituting the back or stem of the majuscules. In some hands this rather large and characteristic curve, a conspicuous feature in the black letter, was replaced by a line which was straight above and curved below (No. 1).

Fluent penmanship converted this fifteenth century mannerism into the forms shown in No. 2. Some writers, on the other hand, reduced it to a mere vertical arc (No. 3); others converted it into the double curve shown in No. 4; and still others into a combination of Nos. 2 and 4 (No. 5). The letters most frequently malformed in this way were the majuscules *C*, *E*,

G, *O*, *Q*, and *T*; but exceptionally even some of the minuscules — *a* and *e*, for example — had their backs transmogrified in this fashion. Not infrequently the vertical curve was replaced by a horizontal curve (No. 6).

9. Another calligraphic trick which serves to perplex the inexperienced reader of Renaissance documents was that of

substituting a descending right-handed curve for a normal left-handed loop (No. 1), or of replacing a normal descending right-handed curve by a left-handed one (No. 2) or by a combination of both. Under this heading we may also include the frequent practice of reversing the normal slant of certain vertical strokes — for example, making them go down from left to right instead of from right to left.

10. The short straight or oblique base at the foot of the stem of a supralinear letter was replaced by a large infralinear right-handed curve, simple or flourished, which was made independently of the stem (No. 1).

11. A rather disconcerting little trick was that of converting the convex tops of certain looped letters (*b*, *e*, *h*, *k*, *l*, etc.) into concave ones (No. 1) and the concave bases of certain

letters (*a*, *b*, *k*, *l*, *r*, etc.) into convex ones (No. 2). In the former case this meant a pen-lift and making the right half of the stem after the vertical descender had been made.

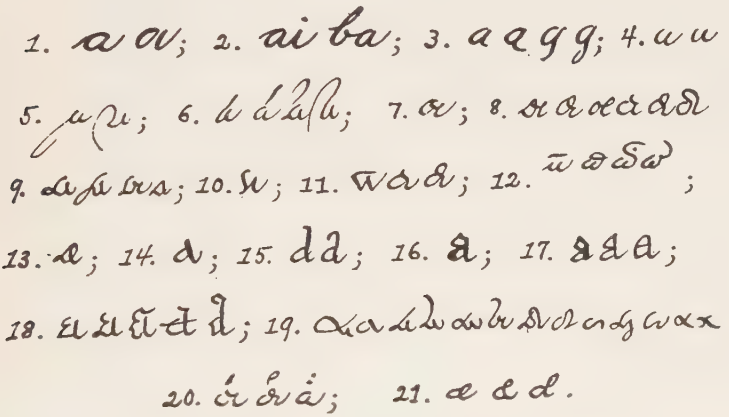
Chapter III

THE MINUSCULES

The description of the small letters, or minuscules, of the secretary alphabet will be facilitated if we make our own Roman written letters the basis of our descriptions.

a

Our script *a* is made up essentially of two parts or elements: a small oval (o), the body of the letter, followed immediately



by the lower half of a larger oval (No. 1). The semioval does not merely follow the oval immediately; it is connected with it — the down stroke of the semioval overlapping in part of its course the right side of the oval. These constituents of the letter, and of the corresponding parts of other letters, may be called the oval, or the "body," and the semioval.

According to the textbooks the oval should be preceded by an ascending oblique stroke or by a short curved horizontal

stroke which connects this letter to a preceding letter. The terminal stroke of one letter, usually the ascending terminal of the semioval, acts as the connecting stroke between two successive letters in a word (No. 2). The stroke by means of which a letter links with a preceding letter may be designated the "hind-link," and that with which it links with a succeeding letter the "fore-link." We may say, then, that our script Roman *a* consists of four parts: a hind-link, an oval body, a semioval, and a fore-link.

Fluent penmen omit the initial upstroke, especially at the beginning of a word; many also omit or greatly curtail the upstroke at the end of a word. Some writers omit the final upstroke, carrying the descending stroke of the semioval down below the line and terminating it there (No. 3). The most common departure from the normal is probably the habit of leaving the oval body open at the top (No. 4), thus making it difficult to distinguish an *a* (an "open" *a*) from a *u*, and sometimes from an *n* (in writers who make their *n*'s and *u*'s alike).

1. Renaissance writers had all of the above bad habits, and they often made matters worse by making their initial upstrokes very long, either straight or curved, beginning them below the line (No. 5). These long introductory upstrokes appear in other letters too, wherever the secretary hand was being written. It is one of the commonest characteristics in manuscripts of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras.

2. Many writers preceded the letter *a* with an oblique supralinear descending stroke, which might or might not be continuous with the oval (No. 6). This spur was frequently replaced by an inverted semioval or incomplete loop (see the third *a* in No. 6). Occasionally, as in the fourth *a* in No. 6, this overhead introductory stroke was continuous with the ascending terminal of a preceding *h*, *x*, or *y*.

3. Variety was also given to the Renaissance *a* by the introduction of a short horizontal concave tie between the oval and the semioval (No. 7), in which case the *a* often looked like an *o* followed by and linked to an *i*. This tie sometimes began

with a little bow, sometimes it ended with one, and sometimes it was straight and slightly above the oval (No. 8). The last of these may excusably be mistaken for a small majuscule. Minuscular *a*'s of this kind may be misread as *ae*, *ec*, *ei*, *er*, *oc*, *oe*, *oi*, *or*, *rt*, *uc*, *ue*, *ui*, *ur*, *si*, etc. Ignorance of this variety of *a* has caused some scholars to misread as *Shockspere* and *Shackspere* the surname at the foot of the first page of Shakspere's will.

Because of the influence of the black letter, with its acute angles in the place of round turnings, many writers broke up the body of the *a* by introducing an angular spur at the point where the oval should have touched the base line (No. 9). In many instances the spur was converted into a bow or reduced to a mere point (No. 9). Such *a*'s are so common in sixteenth century manuscripts that almost no value can be attached to them as a means of identifying a writer.

Many penmen occasionally departed from the normal *a* by substituting a vertical compound curve for the left side of the oval (No. 10). Such *a*'s, which were almost necessarily left open at the top, often prove troublesome to a modern decipherer of old manuscripts.

Open *a*'s had evidently proved troublesome even to Renaissance writers, for we find many scribes of the sixteenth century taking the trouble to close the oval before or after adding the semioval. This results in such *a*'s as are depicted in No. 11. At this point it may be well to recall that open *a*, resembling a *u*, was the normal letter in the Roman cursive which was the ordinary diplomatic hand of Italy and France till about the ninth century; it continued in use as superior *a* — that is, an *a* above the line as a sign of abbreviation — throughout the Renaissance period. Almost as a rule *u*-like superior *a*, often standing for mesial *ra*, *re*, *ri*, *ro*, or *ru*, was supplied with an overhead horizontal bar or with some kind of loop (No. 12).*

* That it is not always easy to tell whether a written character is a superior open *a* or merely a flourish, and that a decision on this point may occasionally become a matter of some importance, are shown in my discussion of one of Shakspere's signatures (*Problems in Shakspere's Penmanship*, 1927).

Originally there were two kinds of *a*, one spurred and with a perpendicular stroke closing the body (No. 13), the other unspurred and with an oblique stroke closing the body (No. 14). In the latter the stem usually rose above the top of the body and very often resembled a straight-stemmed *d* to such an extent as to be mistaken for it. In early Welsh manuscripts one constantly finds such *a*'s as are shown in No. 15. They may be seen occasionally in late Elizabethan documents, as in Henslowe's *Diary*. To avoid confusion between *a* and *d*, no doubt, writers in the tenth century began to turn the top of the stem of the *a* backward (to the left), thus producing the modern lower case printed *a* (a); subsequently the German monks, when evolving the black letter, carried the modification further by adding a hair stroke from the overhead curve to the body, thus giving the letter an overhead loop (No. 16). This is called the "headed" or "two-story" *a*. After that, we find in almost all manuscripts written in the bastard and the secretary hands two varieties of *a*, one headed and one headless. Those who had forgotten or never known how double-decker *a* had been evolved got into the habit of making the two curves on the left side of the *a* continuously, from above downward, as drawn in No. 17. Some went so far as to make an ordinary headless *a* and then insert an oblique or horizontal bar into it (see the third *a* in No. 17). From this it was an easy step to such *a*'s as are shown in No. 18. These *a*'s will give a beginner a great deal of trouble, especially as nothing like them is shown in the penmanship textbooks of Baildon (1571) and his successors.

Even professional scriveners not infrequently modified (or distorted) their letters by substituting angles for arcs, straight lines for curved ones, right-handed curves for left-handed ones, etc., thus giving us such *a*'s as are shown in No. 19.

Accented *a*'s (No. 20) occur in a great many manuscripts — most frequently, of course, in Germany, less often in France, and still less often in England. The student must also be prepared to recognize *ae* ligatures (No. 21), which occur not

infrequently, especially in Latin documents, and are not easily distinguishable from *œ* and *a*.

In English documents, even those of the reign of King James, *a* is very often used instead of *e* in such words as *kepar* (keeper), *late* (let), etc. On the other hand, *e* is often used for *a*, as in *eny* for "any." *Ai* is also often used for *a*, as in *maister* for "master." Such scribal peculiarities were in all probability due to peculiarities in pronunciation.

Attention must be called also to the fact that fairly often words beginning with *a* are written as if they were two words, as *a gain* (again), *a boue* (above). In an eighteenth century transcript of *Arden of Feversham* we find *a wake* (awake) and even *a Sleep* (asleep). Thomas Randolph, preparing *The Drinking Academy* for the printer (*c.* 1625), wrote *a crosse* (across), *a broad* (abroad), *a mong* (among), *a bout* (about), etc. In *The Second Maydens Tragedy* we find *a shamde* (ashamed), and so forth. There can hardly be any question that this peculiarity had its origin in the belief that initial *a* in these words stood for the prepositions "on" and "of," as in *a-clock* (often written *a clock*); in many instances, the belief was correct. The use of *a* or *a'* for "he" was very common. For further information regarding the use of *a* the student is referred to the *New English Dictionary*.

In medieval Roman notation, *A* (or *a*) stood for "fifty" or "five hundred"; a dash over the letter converted it into a symbol for "five thousand."

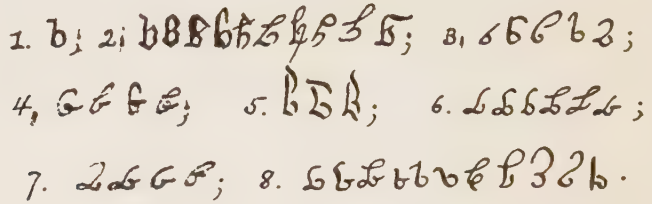
As an abbreviation, *A*, often *a*, with or without a succeeding period or colon, stood for such personal names as "Augustus," "Adam," "Abraham," "Anna." Minuscular *a* was very often used as an abbreviation for *anno* (in the year), *annus* (year), *ante* (before), *artium* (of arts), *ana* (of each), "argent," "answer," "aged," "also," and so forth. In German documents *a.* stands for *an* (on).

It has been averred that Shakspere, as well as some of his contemporaries and predecessors, sometimes abbreviated "and" to *a*, and that this explains some of the errors found in

old printed texts. In the absence of any examples of this abbreviation in extant manuscripts, it is safer to assume that the secretary symbol for "and" (see page 132) was sometimes mistaken for *a*, and *vice versa*.

b

Script *b* originally looked like our lower-case Roman letter (No. 1). As regards this *b* with one loop or "belly" (instead of



the *B* with two loops to the right of the stem) Mr. Isaac Taylor says that, like *d*, *f*, *h*, *l*, *m*, *n*, and *r*, it is "the old Roman cursive, transmitted from Gaul to Ireland in the 5th century, thence to England in the 7th, and adopted into the Caroline minuscule in the 9th."

Early *b*'s, including the black letter variety, were made — roughly speaking — with two downward actions of the pen, one for the supralinear perpendicular stem and one for the concave side (as well as the top and bottom) of the loop. In these *b*'s the belly was closed above and below (No. 2); if the belly was left open below, the letter looked like a variety of *h*. Some modern penmen still make this loop with a downward stroke.

In rapid penmanship, it gradually became the custom to make the loop-curve from below upward (No. 3), in which case the loop was rarely closed above. Such *b*'s, lacking the modern tie with which the letter is linked to a succeeding letter, are still found in some European Italic hands. Ultimately the development of such a tie was, of course, inevitable (No. 4), the tie being really essential to the differentiation of *b* from *l*.

But it is interesting to note how slowly this tie came into general use. In Shakspere's will, for example, written in 1616, one finds a great many *b*'s which can be distinguished from *l*'s only by the context.

The normal letter was modified by various penmen in one or other of the following ways:

1. In the formal writing of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a flourished descending stroke (at the right of the stem) was a conspicuous feature (No. 5).

2. A spur was introduced at the point of transition from the stem to the loop (No. 6). This spur, often converted into a small bow or reduced to a mere point, was with some penmen a means of distinguishing a *b* from an *l*. For conspicuous examples of this, see Shakspere's will.

3. The perpendicular stem was modified in one or more of the usual ways, being replaced, for example, by a convex stroke, a concave stroke, a loop, or a compound curve. With the acquisition of speed in writing the secretary hand, the stem became more oblique (No. 7).

In cursive writing, a *b* might assume any of the shapes shown in No. 8 and might easily be mistaken for a *k*, an *l*, an *r*, a *t*, or a *6*.

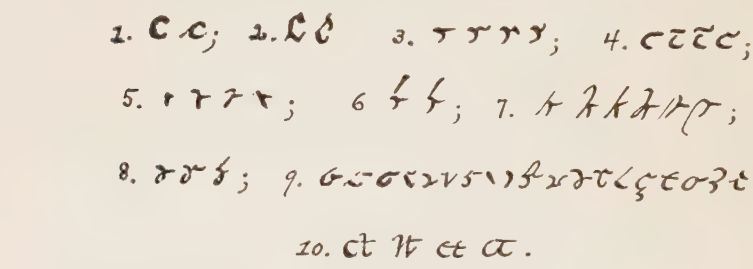
In medieval notation, *B* (*b*) stood for "three hundred"; a dash over the letter converted it into a symbol for "three hundred thousand."

As an abbreviation, *B* (*b*) stood for such names as "Brutus," "Benjamin," and "Beatrice." The letter was also often employed as an abbreviation for "born" (*b. 1590* means "born in 1590"), "bachelor," "before," "Baron," "blasphemer," and so forth.

C

Our lower-case Roman *c* is a descending left-handed curve and may be described as an oval which has been deprived of a section of its right side (No. 1). In ordinary writing, the letter fore-links by a continuation of the ascending terminal stroke.

The early black letter *c* (No. 2) was very much like our letter but was made with two actions of the pen, the top of the letter being supplemented with an independent serif or tick. These *c*'s may be seen in early French and German manuscripts. But the later secretary *c* was a very different letter. It consisted of two parts: (1) a short, deeply curved, vertical (perpendicular) stroke, convex to the right, and (2) a thin, horizontal stroke at the top of this crescent (No. 3).* Not infrequently this horizontal link was represented by a slight curve instead of by a straight line. The letter fore-linked by means of this hori-



zontal head-stroke. Even when the crescent or arc was made with the convexity to the left, as sometimes happened, the letter fore-linked by means of the horizontal stroke (No. 4). Only in the very rarest instances did an Elizabethan penman fore-link his secretary *c* by continuing the lower end of the crescent upward.

Many penmen departed from these two types of the letter in one or more of the following respects:

1. The vertical element was represented by a short perpendicular or oblique line instead of an arc (No. 5).

2. A descending supralinear initial stroke (a spur) preceded the formation of the arc (No. 6).

3. Sometimes this preliminary (ornamental) initial stroke came down to the base line, giving us the letter shown in No. 7.

* It is not impossible — the idea is purely conjectural — that the departure from the normal resulted from an attempt to differentiate the *c* from the *i*. It is worth noting in this connection that in modern German script *c* is differentiated from (unaccented) *i* by having an extra little curl added to the right of the head of the stem.

Instead of a descending spur, the letter might be equipped with an ascending one.

4. If the penman tried to make the letter without a pen-lift, he would produce something like No. 8.

Such *c*'s may be easily mistaken for *a*'s, *o*'s, *r*'s, *i*'s, *e*'s, *t*'s, *k*'s, and *h*'s. (See No. 9.) Looped *c*'s are easily mistaken for *l*'s.

So conscious were some penmen of the possibility of a mistake with regard to their *c*'s that they often substituted a capital *C* (*q.v.*) for their minuscular letter. Such a capital *C* may be found even in the middle of a word. The poet George Gascoigne often wrote his surname *GasCoigne;* in a document relating to Christopher Marlowe we find *hypoCriticall.* A little later, early in the seventeenth century, this custom extended even to the Roman *C* — for example, in the manuscripts of Thomas Heywood and Thomas Randolph.

In some continental countries the *c* was provided with a "cedilla" (a small z) to show that it was to be sounded like *s*, as in "façade."

Double *c* (No. 10) was made so that one crossbar did for both letters; the resulting character often looks like a certain variety of *a* or double *t*, sometimes like *n* or *u*.

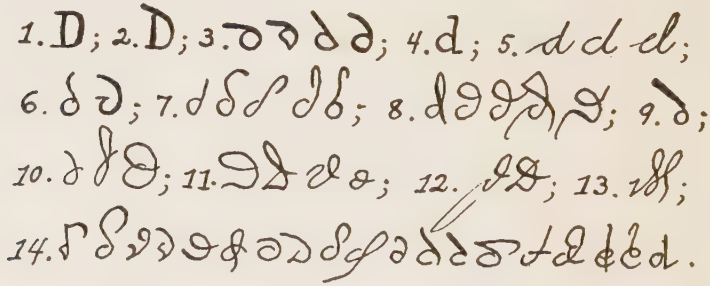
In French and English documents throughout this period, especially in those written in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, many, if not all, words which are now written with initial *auth-* were written with a *c* before the *t*, as *aucthor*, *aucthority*, *aucthentic*. Some of these spellings are etymologically correct, others (as *aucthentic*) are not.

As an abbreviation, *c* (*C*) stands for *centum* (hundred) and *circa* (about), as well as for the initial of certain proper names.

d

Small *d* has a rather interesting history. Like the other minuscules, it is derived from the capital letter. Roman capital *D* in the third and fourth centuries was almost a semicircle,

closed on the left side by a perpendicular line (No. 1). But long before this, prior to the destruction of Pompeii (A.D. 79), the Greeks had extended the upper end of the curve of the body of Roman *D* up and to the left (No. 2). Subsequently, in the third and fourth centuries, the Latins, retaining this upward extension, converted the straight stem into a descending left-handed curve, thus producing the *D* (or *d*) shown in No. 3. From this it was an easy step, in cursive writing, to straighten the stem and produce the modern *d* with the stem to the right and the body to the left (No. 4). But the early rounded *d* has not disappeared. Many writers even now employ two varieties



of *d*, one straight-stemmed and one round-stemmed, such as we find in the Irish uncial of the seventh century and in the Gothic of the thirteenth century, even though the Carolingian minuscule knew only the straight-stemmed letter.

Our copy-book *d* (No. 5) is the straight-stemmed ("upright") letter and consists of a hind-link, an oval body, a short, blind (or open), looped, perpendicular stem, a semioval, and a fore-link. As with the *a* and the *o*, the body of the letter is often open at the top; this is also true of the curved (the Gothic) *d* (No. 6).

Gothic and secretary *d* had no terminal semioval, and the stem leaned decidedly backward (to the left). Some penmen made the ascending stem almost perpendicular (No. 7); others imparted a compound curve to it or ended it with an overhead hook (to the right or to the left). Cursive penmanship con-

verted the simple curved stem into a loop, narrow or wide, which terminated with a long, descending, oblique stroke or with a horizontal rightward curve (No. 8). Skillful scriveners had a trick of fusing the two strokes of the loop, thus producing the most common and most characteristic *d* found in Renaissance documents (No. 9); this *d* usually had a very small body. Instead of a round or oval body, many penmen made a looped body (No. 10); their *d* may easily be mistaken for *I* or *J*. Other penmen dispensed with the body altogether, replacing it with a straight or slightly curved horizontal stroke (No. 11), making the *d* look like a large *e*.

Writers had no difficulty in fore-linking or hind-linking their *d*'s. Initial *d* was often supplied with a spur (No. 12). Double *d*'s were sometimes intertwined in such a manner as to resemble capital *M*'s (No. 13). After what has preceded, none of the *d*'s shown in No. 14 should prove puzzling. That some of these *d*'s may be, and have been, mistaken for other letters, especially *e*, goes without saying; in fact, no error is more likely.

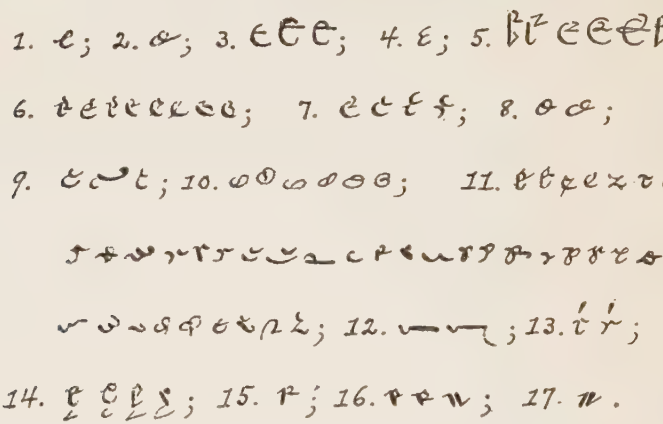
Readers of English Renaissance documents will notice that quite a number of English words, as "father" and "mother," are written with a *d* instead of *th;* this is a survival of the Anglo-Saxon thorn, one of whose forms looks like a rounded *d*. The scribe of *The Second Maydens Tragedy* invariably wrote *farder* for "farther." In Old English the ordinal "hundredth" and the cardinal "hundred" were not distinguished; consequently we often find even educated persons in the Middle English period, and even later, writing "hundreth" for "hundred"; but the thorn had nothing to do with this.

Elizabethan scribes sometimes doubled initial *d*, as in *ddid* (in *Edmund Ironside*).

As an abbreviation, *d* (*D*) most often stood for *denarius* (penny, pence), "Duke," "duchess," *deus*, *dimidium* (half), and (before a date) "died." In the addresses of letters, *d*, *dl*, or *dlr* stood for the word "deliver"; *ddd* meant "deliver posthaste." As a symbol it stood for "five hundred"; $\bar{D}$ meant 500,000.

e

Little as one would think it, our script *e* (No. 1) and the Elizabethan secretary *e* (No. 2) are one and the same letter and only a minuscularized *E*. When it is carefully analyzed, historically, one finds in it all the elements — the perpendicular stem and the three horizontal bars — of the ancient Roman capital. From the very ancient, tall, cumbersome, straight-lined, angular, lapidary *E*, there had developed a rounded



(uncial) *E* (No. 3) nearly a century before the date of the oldest extant manuscripts. It was, in all probability, the normal form of the letter in the old Roman cursive, from which it found its way into the Roman uncial of the seventh century. In the early (fifth century) French cursive it resembles the Greek epsilon (No. 4), but before it acquired that form it must have passed through some of the stages shown in some of our other alphabets (southern French cursive, Irish uncial, and Carolingian minuscule).

The transformation of *E* into *e* can be most conveniently studied in the Gothic script *E* (No. 5): the perpendicular stem was converted into the conventional crescent (a descending left-handed curve), the lowest of the three horizontal bars being

merged in the more or less curved crescent. In many *E*'s and *e*'s of the Middle Ages, the back of the letter is not a crescent but a perpendicular straight stroke with (and sometimes without) an oblique foot (No. 5). For the upper two bars a figure like a small Roman z was substituted, although now and then the two horizontal strokes were not linked together. This "z" was then converted, in hurried writing, into a curved figure resembling a small *2;* and so we find that in the Gothic script, throughout the medieval period and for a long time thereafter, the *e* was written with two actions of the pen (No. 6), some writers omitting the light remnant of the middle bar. After a while persons writing rapidly were content to replace this element, the equivalent of the two upper bars, with a short horizontal overhead curve (No. 7) which thus became the forelink of the *e*. And, of course, many writers made the letter with one action of the pen — that is, without a pen-lift — and there developed the *o*-like *e* shown in No. 8; but careful penmen raised their pens above the paper sufficiently, when proceeding from the stem upward, to leave the *e* open on the right side. Such an *e* (No. 9) often looks like an epsilon, but it always links with the following letter from above, not from the lower end of the stem.

Abnormal varieties of *e* are found in great abundance. Some penmen were fond of terminating the letter within itself (No. 10) by leaving the reversed (overhead) loop incomplete and turning downward what should have been the terminal horizontal stroke. Some curious varieties of *e* result from this trick, some of which are easily mistaken for *o*. The habit of turning convex strokes into concave ones, and *vice versa*, was responsible for the *e*'s depicted in No. 11. The substitution of straight lines for curves and of acute angles for round turnings begot the *e*'s shown in No. 12.

In German documents of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we constantly find two varieties of *e* which are wholly unlike English *e*'s in some respects. One of these (No. 15) consists of a perpendicular stem without a foot and with a small

"2" at the top and to the right of the stem. If the stem and the "2" were made without a pen-lift — as was commonly done — the *e* resembled a small Gothic *s*, a *p*, or a small capital *R* (No. 15). This *e* is very confusing to a beginner in reading old manuscripts. Matters are even worse in the case of those penmen who made the *e* by substituting an oblique straight stroke for the stem and a small "2" or merely a dot or a tiny dash (No. 16) as the equivalent of the two primary horizontal bars. From these varieties of *e* it was an easy step to the modern twin-stemmed German *e* (No. 17).

Accented *e*'s (No. 13) occur in French, German, Italian, and even English documents and printed books throughout this period. In medieval documents we constantly come across *e*'s with a cedilla under them (No. 14) to indicate that these *e*'s stand for the Latin *ae*. We find these "tailed" *e*'s even in some English and many German manuscripts of the sixteenth century, and even a little later.

In hurried writing, such as the letters of Sir Walter Ralegh and one of Shakspere's signatures, final *e* is often reduced to a mere tick or indeterminate flourish, often to the bewilderment of a modern transcriber.

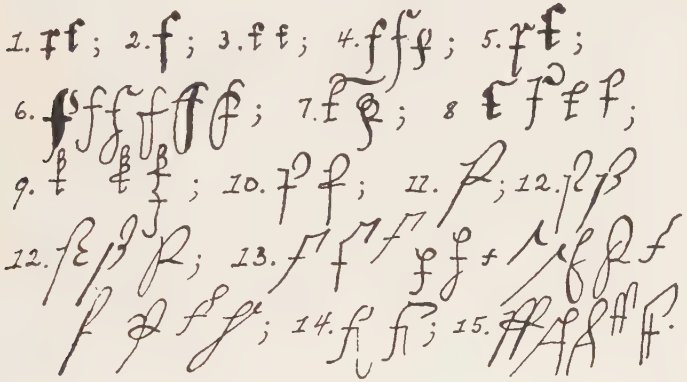
Small *e*'s, when carelessly made, as in the handwriting of Thomas Heywood, may be mistaken for *a*'s, *c*'s, *d*'s, *o*'s, left-shouldered *r*'s, and even *t*'s or accented *i*'s.

The letter *e* was often employed by Elizabethan and earlier English writers instead of an *a*, as in writing *eny* for "any." And, on the other hand, they often wrote an *a*, an *i*, an *o*, or a *y* instead of an *e*, writing *sarient* for "sergeant," *nother* for "nether" (neither), *takyn* for "taken," *restid* for "rested," etc. Some of these orthographic habits were undoubtedly determined by the writer's pronunciation.

As an abbreviation, *e* and *E* most often stood for *est* (is), "Earl," "East," "Edward," "Elizabeth," and "English"; as a Roman numeral, it stood for "two hundred and fifty." In German documents it usually stands for *euer* (your) and *Excellenz* (Excellency).

f

Both cursive and script *f* come from the *F* which the Romans took over from the Greeks, giving it the consonantal sound, though in Greek its sound was approximately that of vocalic *w*. In modern English, *f* always has the familiar *f*-sound, except in the word "of"; in Old English too it had the *f*-sound, but not when it came between two vowels. These facts undoubtedly have a bearing on why even in late Elizabethan and early



Jacobean documents we often find *u* (= *v*) for *f* in such words as *wyues* (for "wife's"), *lyue* (for "life"), etc.

F was one of the first letters to raise its head, even though only slightly, above the linear letters; after a while it also protruded a little tail below the line. It is curious that though it had a fully developed bow below the line and was apparently made with one continuous movement of the pen in the Gallican (French) cursive of the fifth century, it lost these characteristics for a long time in the scripts which were subsequently developed from this.

Gothic *f* consists of three elements: a vertical stem, a head-serif at the right of the stem, and a horizontal bar. It linked with succeeding letters, when penmen began to link their letters, by means of the horizontal bar. Of the three

elements constituting the *f* this bar varies the least, being either straight or slightly curved, light or heavily shaded, on the line or on a level with the top of the linear letters. When the bar is omitted, as happens rarely, especially in the secretary script, the *f* links with the succeeding letter by means of the head-serif. The varied forms which *f* assumes in the current script of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are due chiefly to the writers' attempts to make the head-loop and the bar with one movement of the pen.

In English documents of the twelfth century we find two varieties of *f*, one infralinear and one supralinear (No. 1); the former, with the bar on the line, is Anglo-Saxon and employed in the vernacular; the latter, with the bar above the line, is Gothic and employed in Latin documents.* But for the bar, the former is to all intents and purposes a "medieval" *r*. The letter looked less like such an *r* when it was written (supralinearly, or infralinearly, or both) with the bar above the line (No. 2). In many early documents, in Britain as well as on the Continent, we find an *f* which is wholly a linear letter, going neither above nor below the line (No. 3).

At first the stem was a short, heavy, perpendicular stroke; subsequently the lower end tended more and more to taper off to a fine point and to curve towards the left below the line (No. 4). When the *f* rested on the line it was customary to give it a foot as well as an initial hook (No. 5). The initial hook persisted long after the oblique or horizontal foot disappeared; in many early *f*'s there is a thickening in the upper part of the stem, instead of a hook (No. 5).

During the thirteenth century the most common variety of *f*, a double-length letter, had a heavy, wedge-shaped stem (No. 6). Gradually other ways of modifying the stem crept in (No. 6); some penmen turned the lower end of the stem up, making a hook or a loop below the line; some carried this tail up above

* This differentiation between Anglo-Saxon and Gothic forms applies also to the letters *d*, *g*, and *r*, but the rule was not uniformly adhered to. For interesting examples of this principle, see Johnson and Jenkinson's *English Court Hands*, Part II.

the base line and made it continuous with the crossbar, adding the head-loop afterwards (the fourth *f* in No. 6). Others carried the tail up higher still and made it continuous with the head-loop (the fifth *f* in No. 6); in this way some *f*'s (see the sixth *f* in No. 6) look as if they had two head-loops. In English documents of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries we not infrequently find an *f* (No. 7) with a separate little bow entangled in the head-loop; how and why this came about has not been explained.

The head-serif or head-loop was modified in various ways. At first it was a short and square serif (No. 1); subsequently this serif became a short convex curve, or a concave curve, or a shorter or longer horizontal line (No. 8). Some penmen loved to double and even treble the head-serif (No. 9). In some hands this serif subsequently became a rather large loop, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (No. 10). In the secretary script the *f* was very likely to lean markedly to the right (No. 11), often being almost, if not quite, indistinguishable from an *s*. At the end of a word the crossbar was very often omitted in the Renaissance secretary, its place being taken by a little tag or flourish at the lower end of the head-loop (No. 12). Some writers adorned the letter with a long, curved, hair stroke depending from the bar or from the tip of the head-loop (No. 14). These superfluous strokes were either straight or curved, with or without hooks.

Common varieties of *f* are shown in No. 13.

Instead of capital *F*, Renaissance scribes very frequently employed two small *f*'s (No. 15). Whenever two *f*'s came together, penmen were inclined to link them together in such a way that they had but one head-loop and one crossbar (No. 15). But it must not be supposed that initial double *f* always meant capital *F;* John Fletcher, for example, and Thomas Heywood, and also the scribe of *The Second Maydens Tragedy*, frequently wrote *ff* as the initial letter of any word in the middle of a sentence. Now and then one comes across such an anomaly as *Ff* at the beginning of certain family names, as "Ffiennes,"

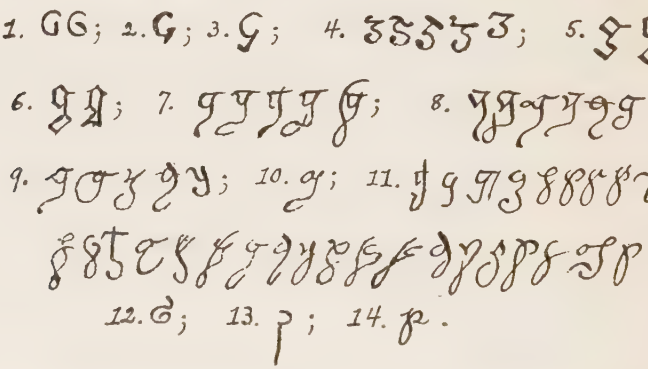
"Ffoulkes." Some English families still write their surnames with *ff*.

In medieval Roman notation, *F* (*f*) stood for the numeral "forty," but a dash over the letter converted it into "forty thousand."

As an abbreviation, *f* (*F*) most frequently stands for "folio," "farthing," "foot," "franc," *fiat* (let it be made), "florin," "French," *frère* (brother), "father," "fellow," "Friday," "February," and for certain personal names, as "Frederick." In German documents, *F* stands for *Frau* (Mrs.), *Fräulein* (Miss), and *Fürst* (prince).

g

To understand the many varieties which the letter *g* assumes in Renaissance manuscripts it may be as well to say



something about its history. Up to the middle of the third century B.C. the letter *C* was employed in Latin inscriptions to denote both *c* and *g*. The desire to distinguish between these two sounds led subsequently to an attempt at differentiating the form of the letter employed for the respective sounds; *C* was retained for the *k*-sound of *c*, and *G* (No. 1) was used for *g* (the hard sound, as in "go"). In the Latin uncial of the third century A.D. the *G* has a tiny downward curl at the lower end of the descending left-handed curve constituting the

body of the letter (No. 2). It is not until we come to the Roman uncial of the seventh century that the *G* acquires an infralinear tail (No. 3). In the same century we find (in the Roman cursive, the Irish uncial, etc.) lower-case *g*'s which seem to be only badly made *G*'s with a flat top, a straight line or a horizontal compound curve, with or without an initial serif (No. 4). When the loop of the Irish guttural *g* (the fourth letter in No. 4) was closed below, it became Anglo-Saxon yogh. The horizontal bar became a permanent feature of the lower-case *g* and survives to this day as the little curl at the top of our printed lower-case *g* and the black-letter 𝔤. The head-loop of the Caroline *g* was developed when the right end of the flat bar was turned down to meet the descending curve (No. 5). In the black-letter script of the thirteenth century the infralinear tail was turned up, forming an infralinear loop (No. 6).

In the secretary alphabet, which developed from the Caroline minuscule, the head of the *g* was converted into a small semioval, and the infralinear loop into a simple or a sinuous tail; the flat bar, closing the semioval, was made last and linked the *g* to the succeeding letter (No. 7). As might have been anticipated, the head was modified in various ways, as by the addition of a spur or by the substitution of a figure like our printed *v* for the semioval (No. 8). The flat bar was sometimes omitted and sometimes replaced by a little curl, and sometimes the tail was carried up above the line in such a way as to make it do for the crossbar (No. 9). Occasionally the head was an oval which was linked to a succeeding tail by means of a tie (No. 10). In the set hands one constantly finds *g*'s made up of a number of straight lines and looking like angular *8*'s. In fluent penmanship, freak varieties of *g* (No. 11) are of common occurrence. Not rarely one finds a small majuscular *G* used for the minuscule (No. 12).

In fifteenth century documents we sometimes find the Anglo-Saxon guttural *g* or the character shown in No. 13 instead of a secretary *g*.

Attention must be drawn to the remarkable fact that in

Germany, especially in the sixteenth century, very many, perhaps most, penmen made a *g* (No. 14) without any trace of the oval or bowed head. It resembles a modern script *p* more than anything else. A few writers made their *y*'s exactly the same way. Rarely some persons made a *g* exactly like a figure-of-eight *h*. This sort of *g* is made by a large number of penmen today.

Some of the above *g*'s may be mistaken for *h*'s, *p*'s, long *s*'s, and *y*'s.

In legal documents, and occasionally in others (especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), a *y* often takes the place of a *g*, especially in certain words, as *yeuen* for "given." "Again" was often written and even printed *ayaine*. And it is not uncommon to find a *g* doing duty for *i* (*j*) in such words as *subgect* (for "subject").

As a Roman numeral, *G* (*g*) stood for "four hundred"; with a dash above it, the letter represented "four hundred thousand."

As an abbreviation, *G* (*g*) stood for "Grace" (as a name and a title), "George," "German," "Germany," as well as for "great," "green," *gauche* (left), *gelb* (yellow), *gnädig* (gracious).

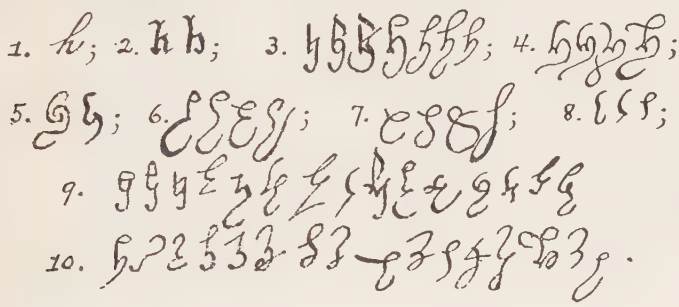
h

Our *h* (No. 1) consists of a supralinear vertical loop followed by two semiovals, the first right-handed, the second left-handed and serving as the fore-link. Black-letter *h* substituted a perpendicular stem for the supralinear loop and dispensed with the second semioval (No. 2). Secretary *h* differs from both of these in the gradual reduction of the looped stem to a mere bow, in the elimination of the second semioval, and in the acquisition of a sinuous infralinear tail (No. 3). This tail might swing over to the left or to the right before returning to the base line. The stem might be converted to a perpendicular straight line, to a vertical compound curve, or to a simple (concave or convex) curve, or it might be indented about its middle

(No. 4). There was apparently no objection to detaching the tail from its stem (No. 5).

When the supralinear loop was reduced to a mere bow and the first semioval was wholly dispensed with, the letter took on the shape shown in No. 6. This easily degenerated into the forms shown in No. 7.

Now and then one comes across a variety of *h* (No. 8), as in the handwriting of Sir Walter Ralegh, which cannot be explained by any known calligraphic principles.



Common varieties of *h* met with in Renaissance manuscripts are shown in No. 9. The Italic influence is discernible in some of the *h*'s shown in No. 10.

Many Elizabethan penmen had a habit of crossing their *h*'s with a short or long, straight or curved, horizontal stroke through the supralinear loop, even in words which were not contracted. They did this also with their *k*'s and *l*'s.

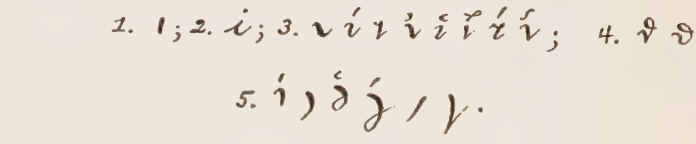
Some of the *h*'s shown above may easily be mistaken for *b*'s, *l*'s, *p*'s, and *x*'s.

In medieval notation, *h* (*H*) stood for "two hundred"; a dash above the *H* converted it into a symbol for "two hundred thousand."

As an abbreviation for personal names, *H* or *h* stood for "Henry," "Helen," etc. Other words sometimes represented by the letter *h* are "half," "height," "high," "Highness," "hundred," "husband," and a few others. In German documents, *h* stands for *Herr* (Mr., Sir) and *Hochheit* (Highness).

i

Reduced to a minimum, an *i* consisted of a short perpendicular straight stroke (No. 1). Today it consists of a diagonal connecting stroke (a hind-link) followed by a semioval with a dot above it (No. 2); but it must be admitted that many penmen do not dot their *i*'s as often as they ought to. Gothic *i* differed from our *i* in being much smaller but also in slanting decidedly either to the right or to the left, in having an acute angle at its head and at its foot, and in being accented, instead



of dotted (No. 3). The accent had almost any shape, being either vertical or horizontal, straight or curved. The accent was not added to the *i* until the eleventh century, and even then it was added only if the *i* stood next to another *i* or to a *u;* in the next century the *i* was accented also if it stood next to certain other letters, especially to an *m* or an *n*. (This absurd rule was followed even in some early printed books.)

A dot replaced the accent in the fourteenth century, but its use did not become common, being least popular in Italy and in France. Even the use of the accent was more often honored in the breach than in the observance. Many penmen, Shakspere among them, seem never to have accented or dotted their *i*'s, even though the failure to do so must often have made it difficult to read their manuscripts. Undotted *i*'s are easily mistaken for *c*'s and for minims of *n* or *m*.

Not infrequently some penmen made the *i* and the *i*-dot (or accent) without lifting the pen from the paper; the resulting *i* often resembled a *d*, an *e*, or an *o* (No. 4). In German script of today this is still a common phenomenon.

In Elizabethan and Jacobean orthography an *i* often did

duty for an *e*, as in *hir* (her) and *takin* (taken), and was itself often replaced by a *y*, as in *yt* (it) and *gyve* (give). The use of *i* for the sound of *j*, both at the beginning and in the middle of words, as in *ioine* (join) and *adiourne* (adjourn), persisted from the earliest times till well through the seventeenth century, notwithstanding the fact that, as early as the fifteenth century, scribes attempted to differentiate initial *i* (for the sound of *j*) from medial *i* by lengthening the former and giving it a turn to the left (No. 5). Early *j*'s did not always go below the line.

As a numeral, *I* (or *i*) stands for "one"; after *v*, *x*, *l*, etc., it means add one (or as many ones as there are *i*'s); before *v* and *x* it means deduct one: hence *iv* = 4, *ix* = 9. As to the dotting of these *i*'s see Chapter II.

As an abbreviation, *I* (*i*) and *J* (*j*) stood for "Isaac," "Jane," "Isabella," "John," "Jesus," "Island," "Judge," *Imperator*, *id est*, etc. Many persons wrote *I* for "aye" or "ay."

j

Strictly speaking, there was no *j* in the secretary alphabet, the *i* at the beginning and in the middle of a word (as in *iudge*

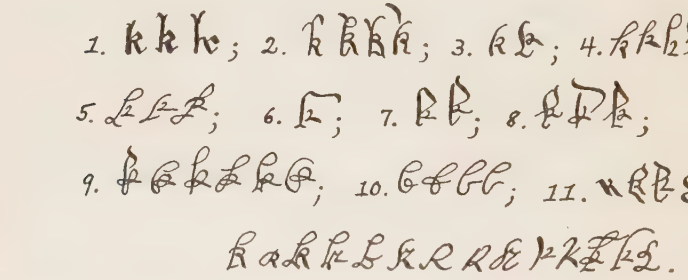
and *maiesty*) being read as a *j*. At the end of a word (most frequently in Latin words) the *i* was made as we make our *j* (that is, by a prolongation below the line and the introduction of an infralinear loop), although in most instances the return stroke of the loop was omitted or represented by a little curl (No. 1). These elongated final *i*'s were generally employed for the numeral *I* when standing alone or at the end of a number, as *j* (= 1) and *vij* (= 7). When an *i* or a *j* stood for *I* it was customary to dot the letter, but many penmen, it is needless to say, ignored this sensible rule. A final *s*, in Latin words, might now and then follow such an elongated *i*.

In the writing of a penman who was in the habit of making the elongated vertical *r*, an elongated and undotted *i* might cause some difficulty in the reading.

A few common and some uncommon varieties of *j* are shown in No. 2.

k

Examination of the alphabets shown in Chapter I will reveal that the Latin alphabets and the alphabets derived from them



prior to the tenth century had no *k*. This was not because they had no *k*-sound; they had it, but the sound was expressed by the letter *c*, a sound which the letter still has in a great many words. The fact that the *K* was an angular letter and did not fit well in a rounded alphabet probably also had something to do with its temporary disappearance from the scripts of western Europe. These are the reasons, no doubt, why we never find a *k* in Old English. But when, owing to French influence, many Middle English words changed their pronunciation by giving the letter *c* the sounds of *ch*, *s*, and *sh*, it was decided to eliminate the resulting ambiguity and to resurrect the discarded *k*. The use of *ck* for *k* in the middle and at the end of certain Anglo-Saxon English words today, and much more frequently in the Elizabethan period, bears interesting testimony to this bit of history.*

Gothic *k* consists of two essential parts: a perpendicular

* In many German documents of the sixteenth century we find *ck* for *ch* (as in *sprack* for *sprach*) and *ckh* for *ck*.

supralinear stem, and a linear bow to the right of the stem and contiguous with it (No. 1). The bow is, obviously, the result of the minuscularization of the two oblique strokes of the capital *K*. In the earliest *k*'s found in eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth century documents, mostly English, the lower stroke of the bow descends to the line like a sort of tail and often terminates with a little upward hook (No. 1). If this bow stood alone it would resemble a certain variety of *r* (*q.v.*).

The perpendicular stem of the *k* was, as usual, modified in various ways, some changing it to a convex stroke, some to a concave stroke, and others to a compound curve. Some writers gave it a pronounced indentation near the base line. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries it was the custom to give the head of the heavily shaded stem a notched or forked appearance (No. 2), by adding a short down stroke to one or other side of the upper end of the stem. Other straight-stemmed letters — *b*, *d*, and *l*, for example — were treated in the same way, a practice which has given rise to the notch apparent even in modern black-letter fonts. When writing became current, the notch was dispensed with (No. 3). In the thirteenth century it became fashionable, as writing tended to become more current, to convert the stem into a vertical loop by the addition of a preliminary fine upstroke to the right of the stem (No. 4); but, of course, this was by no means universal. Towards the end of the twelfth century, it became customary not to carry the tail of the loop down to the line but to run it over to the right horizontally, thus converting the bow into a figure resembling a *2* or a small *z*. This reduced bow continued in use as long as the Gothic script was written. Some writers put the "2" on the line (see the fourth *k* in No. 4); some substituted a horizontal "v" or semioval for it (No. 4).

Like other letters with a perpendicular stem, *k* was often provided with a horizontal or oblique, curved or angular, foot at the base line (No. 5). A floreated stroke at the head of the stem (No. 6 and No. 8) was probably just as common as a foot at its base.

In the fourteenth century it became rather common to convert the perpendicular looped stem (No. 7) into what may be roughly described as a pennon (a triangular flag on a pole). This was done not only with the letter *k* but also with the letters *b*, *h*, and *l*, and occasionally even with some others. Not all penmen made this triangular loop from below upward; some made the oblique strokes at the right of the stem from above downward, with a separate movement of the pen, thus often imparting a curve to the upper one of the two strokes (No. 8). It was about this time, too, that it became rather common for the *2*-like bow to cut across the stem (see the second *k* in No. 8). The *k* fore-linked by means of the tail of this bow.

In the course of time many writers dispensed with the pennon effect but made their vertical loops angular at the top (see the third *k* in No. 8). To modern eyes this suggests — incorrectly, of course — that the penman was clumsy in the manipulation of his quill or suffered from some crippling disease.*

When penmen began to write more hurriedly, dispensing with pen-lifts, at the risk of complicating and confusing the outlines of their letters, the *k* assumed such forms as are shown in No. 9. A more serious distortion of the letter followed when rapid penmen converted this bow into a little loop or an indeterminate flourish (No. 10), in which case the letter looked more like an *l* or a *b*. That Shakspere was one of these is proved not only by his extant autographs but by certain errors in the text of some of his plays.

An assorted variety of *k*'s occurring in sixteenth and seventeenth century manuscripts is shown in No. 11. Some of these may easily be mistaken for other letters, especially for

* It is chiefly, no doubt, because of ignorance of neurology and the normalcy of such triangularization and indentation of the looped stems of certain secretary letters, especially *b*'s, *k*'s, and *l*'s, that a number of modern writers have promulgated the erroneous notion that Shakspere suffered from writer's cramp, cerebral arteriosclerosis, epilepsy, chronic alcoholism, and what not. Some scholars have taken advantage of this fantastic diagnosis to claim that the handwriting in certain pages in *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* is Shakspere's own even though it does not look like Shakspere's, claiming that the differences are attributable to the fact that when Shakspere wrote the pages in question he was free from writer's cramp.

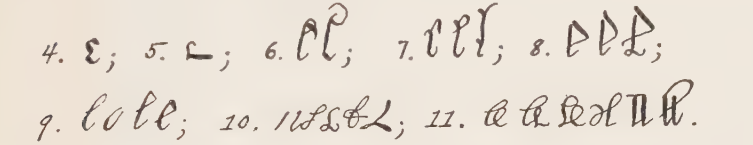
b's, *l*'s, and capital *R*'s. The general principles laid down in Chapter II will explain even the most unusual-looking *k*.

In Roman notation, *k* (*K*) stood for "two hundred and fifty"; with a dash over it, for "two hundred and fifty thousand."

As an abbreviation, *k* (*K*) stands most often for "knight," "king," *kalendae* (kalends), *Kaiser* (emperor), and personal names beginning with *K*.

l

Lower-case *l*, one of the oldest letters in the alphabet, differed from capital *L* in having a curved hook instead of a



straight horizontal stroke at the foot of the stem (No. 1). This hook, which is very often replaced by an angular hook or by a loop (No. 2), is not, as in so many other letters, a mere excrescence; its presence is justified by its derivation from the shorter of the two oblique strokes constituting the ancient Greek lambda.

The vertical stem was, as usual, modified in various ways (No. 3). Some writers, especially in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, treated it as a linear letter (No. 4), though it had been one of the first two letters to extend above the heads of the other letters. In the early *Caractère de Civilité* it was a very short letter (No. 5). As with the other tall letters, this one also very early acquired a looped stem; in the thirteenth century the head of this loop was often doubled (No. 6); prior to this, and for a long time afterwards, the top of the stem was very frequently notched or tricked out with a superfluous heavy tick (No. 7).

In the fourteenth century it became customary to introduce the triangular loop or large angular hook into the *l* (No. 8). In the next century the *l* is usually very much like our letter, differing from it, however, in many hands — Shakspere's, for example — in converting the stem into a narrow triangular loop (No. 9).

Other varieties of *l* are shown in No. 10. Some of these and of the preceding letters may easily be mistaken for *b*'s, *e*'s, *h*'s, *k*'s, *s*'s, and *t*'s.

An interesting point to note about this letter is that when two *l*'s came together, sixteenth and seventeenth century penmen gave them one top, or made one taller than the other, or gave one a round base-hook and the other a horizontal base, or otherwise related them (No. 11). Such double *l*'s have been mistaken for *A*, *a*, *sl*, *se*, *tl*, *te*, *ss*, etc. Two successive *l*'s often did duty for a capital *L*. *Ll* for *L* was common, especially as the initial letter of a name, and is still met with even outside of Wales,* as in the names "Lloyd," "Llach," "Llight," "Llewellyn," and "Llanellyn."

A word or two of explanation regarding the use of *l* (*L*) for "fifty" may be in place here. To express this number the ancient Latins did not use the initial letter of a Latin word meaning "fifty," but the Chalcidian symbol chi (which closely resembles an inverted arrowhead: ↓); in lapidary script it was easier to "write" this letter by converting the two little oblique strokes to horizontal ones (⊥). Subsequently the resulting character was easily assimilated to *L*.

In Roman notation, an *L* with a horizontal line above it stood for "fifty thousand."

As an abbreviation, *L* (or *l*) stood not only for personal names beginning with this letter but also for a considerable number of other such words, as, for example, "lord," "lady," "lordship" (usually written *lp*), "left," *libra* (pound), "lake,"

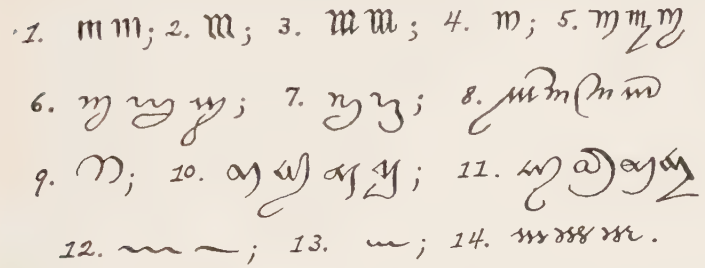
* For the pronunciation of Welsh *ll* the reader is referred to works dealing with the Welsh language. Here it is sufficient to say that it is sounded very much like *chel* in the German name *Michel*.

lira, *lire*, *loco*, etc. Its most common use, especially when elevated slightly above the line, was as a symbol for "pound." *Ll* or *ll* stood for "pounds," "lords," and "lordships."

m

Though the letter *M* (*m*) is one of the oldest in our alphabet and has undergone but very little change from its initial Phoenician form, it is often a difficult letter to identify in medieval and Renaissance manuscripts. The reason for this will appear below.

Gothic *m* consists of three minims (short, vertical strokes



on the base line) linked together at the top by two light, ascending, oblique strokes (No. 1). In early manuscript books these light linking strokes are often wanting (No. 1) — a fact which, because *n*'s, *u*'s, and *i*'s were written similarly, makes it often difficult to say what letter or letters a succession of such minims represents. Skilled writers of this script introduced various fancy touches, adding obtuse angles to the heads and to the feet of the minims (No. 2) or a rounded or an angular right hook at the foot of each minim (No. 3). If the minims stood close together, or if the hooks were large, the letter was closed below as well as above, and this often makes it difficult to identify it. Such *m*'s may easily be mistaken for such combinations as *ai*, *ac*, *at*, *ia*, *ca*, *ta*, *ar*, *in*, *nc*, *nt*, *ni*, and *ry*.

As soon as scribes began to write more fluently, they tended to impart a slight curve to some of the minims, especially the

last one (No. 4). It was not long before this rounded terminal minim was carried down below the line and there twisted around to the right or to the left (No. 5). Looped *m*'s (No. 6) are of common occurrence and are readily mistaken for *ui*, *ni*, *iy*, *iz*, etc. This becomes especially puzzling in the case of penmen who converted their *m* into an *n* with a rounded tail (No. 7).

Decorative initial upstrokes (No. 8), with or without initial hooks, are of the utmost frequency throughout this period. Terminal upward flourishes (No. 8), especially in words ending with *m*, occur with almost equal frequency.

Quite early in the period we are studying, a large number of scribes acquired the habit of giving their *m* a decidedly rounded semiuncial form (No. 9). It was not long before this resulted in the complete closure of the space between the first two minims below, the *m* thus being converted into what looks like an *a* followed by a long winding tail (No. 10). After this we find most writers, especially in Italy, making instead of initial *m* a lower-case Roman *a* with an absurdly sinuous tail (No. 11).

When the Gothic script began to degenerate, as it was bound to do when writing became more current, *m*, like *n* and *u*, became a mere wavy horizontal stroke, and often merely a dash (No. 12). This sort of writing begot the *m*'s with round connecting strokes between the minims below and none above (No. 13).

A variety of secretary *m* which deserves to be mentioned, even if for no other reason than that Shakspere wrote it, consists of slightly waved minims (No. 14).

In Middle English manuscripts one occasionally finds the letter *m* before a word beginning with a vowel, as in *mexcuse* for "me excuse." This may have been due to French influence.

In medieval Roman notation, *m* (*m*^{l}, *M*) stood for "one thousand"; a dash over the letter converted it into a symbol for "one million"; several *m*'s in succession meant as many thousands as there were *m*'s. Another way of indicating a

number of thousands was to put the appropriate Arabic numeral or Roman number before the *M;* thus, "four thousand" could have been written *mmmm*, *4M*, *iiijM*, or *ivM*. A *C* to the left of an *M* subtracted one hundred.

Although nowadays we use the letter *m*, usually the capital *M*, for "one thousand" almost exclusively in dates, it was not at all unusual for writers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to employ it in any context, as in "a *m* [thousand] to one." Most frequently, the *m* (often *ml* or m^{l}) for "thousand" was written above the line. It may be added, in passing, that this *m* was not adopted as a symbol for "thousand" because it is the initial letter of the word *mille*, but because the Etruscan phi (Ⓘ), a symbol used for "one thousand," was written ↀ and afterwards confounded with Anglo-Saxon ↀ or Roman *M*. ↀ for *M* may be seen on the title-pages of some books printed in the Elizabethan era.

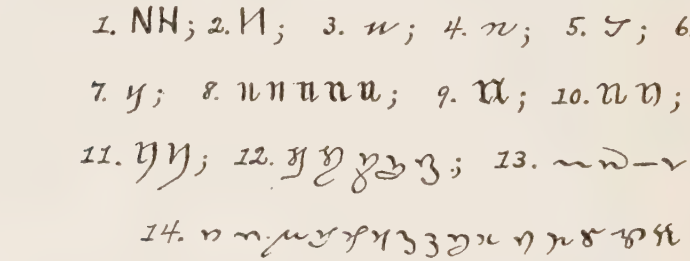
As an abbreviation, *m* (*M*) usually stands for personal names beginning with this letter, as well as for the words *magister*, "master," "majesty," "marquis," *monsieur*, "malefactor," "mistress," "Monday," "male," *meridies* (noon), and so forth. *M'* stood for "Mac."

n

In many respects the letter *n* is a much more puzzling letter than *m*. Gothic scripts all present us with two distinct types of capital *N*, one Roman and one which may be regarded as a derivative of the early Greek nu. The former of these consists of two vertical minims joined by a descending oblique stroke going from some point near the head of the first minim to the foot of the second (No. 1); the latter (No. 2) consists of two vertical minims joined by an ascending oblique stroke going from some point near the foot of the first minim to the head of the second.

Minuscular *n*, as we write it today, is really nothing but a majuscular modification of one of the two early Greek varieties

of nu (ᚾ), as is clearly to be inferred from the angular *n* still employed in modern German script (No. 3); but we convert the acute angle at the head of each minim into a curve (No. 4). Regarding the origin of this non-Roman *n*, we may conjecture that it is a derivation from the Phoenician nun (No. 5) which was itself derived from the Egyptian symbol (No. 6) for the letter *n* (the "water-line"). Phoenician nun, written hurriedly, is easily convertible into a rather common variety of Gothic *n* (No. 7). In sixteenth century German documents — for example, the letters of Simon Pistoris, 1534 — we find *n*'s exactly like those shown in No. 6.



Writers of Gothic "text" script in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and for a long time thereafter, "printed" their *n*'s vertically, with the minims rather close together and often without any apparent connecting strokes between them; most often, however, the head of the second minim was provided with a sort of round shoulder which represented the tie (No. 8). At this time the minims, almost as a rule, were equipped with angular serifs at their foot (No. 8), sometimes completely closing the letter below and making it resemble an *a*. Many scribes made their *n*'s with the usual Gothic obtuse angle at the head and at the foot of each minim (No. 9); this *n* subsequently became the model for the black letter of the early printers.

In the thirteenth century two tendencies became conspicuous: to round the serifs at the foot of the minims, and to impart a decided rightward curve to the second minim (No. 10). With this went a tendency to carry the second minim below

the line (No. 11), as was being done with the final minim of the *m*. Later on, the elongated second minim was provided with a tail or a loop (No. 12).

Current penmanship often reduced the *n*, especially at the end of a word, to a mere wavy line or to a perfectly straight horizontal stroke; sometimes the letter was supplied with an upward and backward flourish; and not infrequently some penmen substituted a short, horizontal, curved tie for the round shoulder of the second minim (No. 13). Other varieties of *n* are shown in No. 14.

Minuscular *n*'s may be mistaken for *ii*, *u*, *v*, *m*, *p*, *a*, and *id*. Within and at the end of a word, *n*, like *m* and *r*, was often omitted after a vowel, the omission being indicated by a straight or curved horizontal stroke above the vowel preceding the omission.

As an abbreviation, *n* (*N*) stood most frequently for "north," "northern," "new," "number," *natus* (born), "note," and *nomen* (name), as well as for personal names beginning with *N*.

In medieval Roman notation, *N* stood for "ninety" or "nine hundred"; with a dash over it, for "nine thousand" or "ninety thousand."

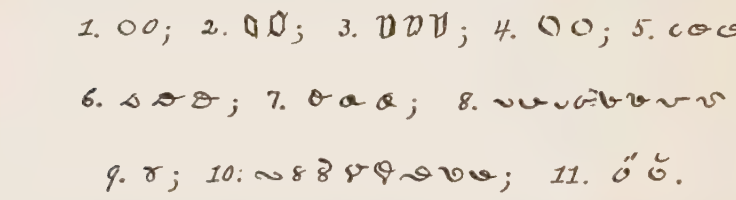
O

Regarding the *o* there is really not much to be said, it bears in most instances such a close resemblance to our own letter. Notwithstanding this, it is not infrequently mistaken for an *e*, a small *d*, or a *v*.

In most cursive hands *o* was a diminutive circle or oval (No. 1); but in text hands it was almost invariably converted into a sort of lozenge-shaped parallelogram (No. 2), very much like what it is in the black letter. Even as early as the eleventh century, however, writers of the Gothic script converted the left half of the oval into a vertical minim (an undotted *i*) and then added the right half (a descending right-handed curve) by a separate action of the pen (No. 3), thus making it almost

indistinguishable from a later *u* (*v*). The ideal *o* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in text hands was the double-action letter shown in No. 4, the first stroke being thin above and heavy below, the second one heavy above and thin below. In cursive script the *o* was written with one action of the pen, as we make it, and usually without a fore-link (No. 5). Sooner or later, however, the letter developed a fore-link and then, as a rule, it was left open at the top (No. 5).

In the fantastic scripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and in the writing of playfully artistic penmen of the sixteenth century, the left half of the letter was not infrequently converted into an oblique, thin, straight stroke (No. 6). This explains the spur which is now and then encountered in the *o*'s in some sixteenth and seventeenth century documents. It



the *o* was left open at the top, as often happened, some conscientious penmen closed it by the addition of a straight or curved stroke which thus served as a fore-link and often made the *o* look like an *a* (No. 7). As writing became more rapid and more careless, the *o* was often converted into a flat horizontal curve, wide open at the top (No. 8), thus bearing a striking resemblance — in some hands — to a *b*, an *e*, or a *v*.

Some writers reversed their *o*'s, making the right side first (No. 9).

Other varieties of *o* are shown in No. 10.

In some foreign languages — German, for example — *o* was often surmounted by one or two accents (No. 11) to indicate a modification of the vowel sound.

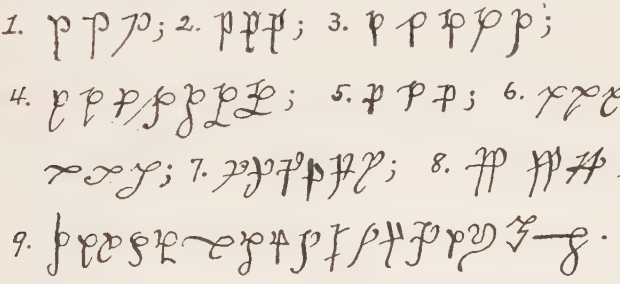
In medieval Roman notation, *o* (*O*) stood for "eleven"; with a dash over it (*Ō*), for "eleven thousand."

As an abbreviation, *o* (*O*) stood for *octarius* (pint) — an abbreviation still used by physicians and chemists — "old," and *obiit* (died), as well as for proper names beginning with *O*. With or without a succeeding apostrophe, it stood for "of" or "on."

As a patronymic prefix in Irish names, *O'* (or *o'*) means "son" or "descendant of" and is equivalent to the Gaelic *Mac*, to the Norman *Fitz-*, and to the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian suffixes *-son* and *-sen*.

p

Minuscular *p* is one of the most interesting letters in the secretary alphabet. It is one of the four letters — the others



being *g*, *q*, and *y* — which seem almost always to have been extended below the line. For variety of form it compares very favorably with *h*, *r*, and *s*. In the Carolingian minuscule and in the black letter its head (the "body") was always closed below as well as above, though in all previous Italic alphabets (except the Roman uncial of the seventh century) it was open below (No. 1).* From this it is all but certain that the head of the *p* was a right-handed curve which was made after the perpendicular or oblique shaft. The Carolingian minuscule attached a vertical oval head to the right of the shaft (No. 2) and the black letter of the thirteenth century followed suit (No. 2).

* The reason for this was probably the fact that in many European alphabets our (closed) *p* stood for an *r*.

But after this, scribes modified the letter by converting the head into a loop which was made after a short, vertical, linear stem and before the lower part of the shaft (No. 3). Most of the time this was done in such a manner that the linear stem and the infralinear shaft seem to have been made as one stroke, but careful examination with a magnifying glass shows how the letter was really made.

These *p*'s were, of course, often supplied with the customary serifs and introductory as well as terminal upstrokes (Nos. 3 and 4), the shaft being either perpendicular, oblique, convex, or concave. Not infrequently the ascending terminal was replaced by a short or long horizontal foot, looped or unlooped (No. 4). Probably because the *p* was characteristically an infralinear letter, the shaft was often of considerable length, sometimes as much as an inch and even more.* In returning to or towards the base line, the writer sometimes turned to the right, sometimes to the left, the turn being made round or acute (No. 4).

Considering the great tendency to supply *p*'s with long shafts, it is remarkable that as early as the twelfth century one finds a large number of *p*'s with extremely short, perpendicular, club-footed shafts (No. 5). This exaggeratedly short *p* is a characteristic of many varieties of secretary and is displayed as a normal form in Granjon's *Caractère de Civilité* (see Alphabet 6 in H. Jenkinson's *Later Court Hands*).† These short-stemmed *p*'s persisted throughout the seventeenth century.

Fluent penmanship converted the normal head of the *p* into a flattened little loop or bow (No. 6).

No doubt because of Italian influence, many writers reverted to the early variety of *p*, making the head after the shaft; but in doing so, they often failed to close the head at the

* The point about the length of the *p*-shaft has to be made because it has recently been urged that a (questioned) Shakspere autograph in a copy of Montaigne's *Essaies* (1603), belonging to the British Museum, is spurious because the descender of the *p* in the surname is almost an inch long.

† Notwithstanding this wide distribution of the "truncated" *p*, some recent paleographers have attempted to establish Shakspere's authorship of certain pages ("the Addition") in the manuscript of *Sir Thomas Moore* on the ground that this variety of *p* occurs only in this manuscript and in one of Shakspere's signatures.

top (No. 7). These *p*'s were made with two or with three movements of the pen.

In the case of double *p*, one head often did duty for both letters (No. 8).

One inexperienced in reading secretary manuscripts may easily mistake *p*'s for *h*'s, *x*'s, and *y*'s. A few somewhat unusual varieties of *p* are depicted in No. 9.

In German documents a *p* often takes the place of a *b*, as in *pöse* for *böse*, *pruder* for *bruder*.

In the Roman notation of the Middle Ages, *P* stood for "four hundred"; a *P* with a dash over it, for "four hundred thousand."

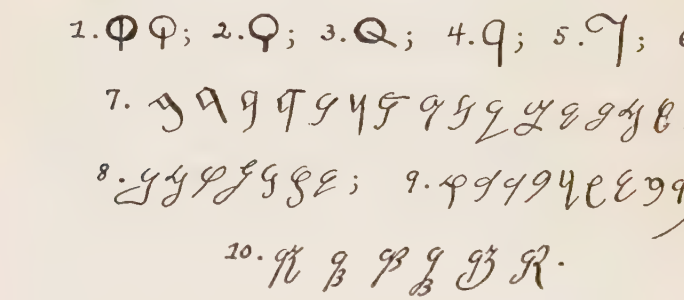
As an abbreviation, *p* (*P*) stands most often for "page," *pater* (father), *pondere* (by weight), *post* (after), "prince," "past," *père* (father), *passé* (past), "probate," "Pope," and *pour* (for). A flourished *p*, standing for the Latin word *per* (by), is very frequently met with in documents, especially those of a legal character, and in accounts. *P* also stood for such proper names as "Paul" and "Peter."

q

Of all the minuscules in our alphabet, *q* has probably undergone less variation than any of the other letters. Phoenician qoph (No. 1), the parent of Greek koppa (No. 2), from which our *q* is derived, was a circular body bisected wholly or in part by a vertical rod which terminated with a small foot below the circle. The early Greek alphabet retained the foot but omitted the rest of the bisector. When the Roman alphabet adopted the Greek capital the foot was directed to the right (No. 3), producing a Q which is almost identical with our majuscule. In the early Greek minuscule this letter, being made with one pen-action, acquired the form shown in No. 4, thus strikingly resembling the later Roman *G*. The Roman uncial of the third century converted this into a circular body with a long infra-linear vertical stem to the right of the body (No. 4), thus giving

us our modern lower-case letter. Only one other modification — an anomalous one — needs to be noticed here: in the sixth century Gallican uncial, as we see it in the St. Hilary Codex, the *q*-body (the oval) is open below (No. 5). How this form developed is not difficult of explanation if we associate it with the Gallican cursive (No. 6).

Gothic *q*, as we see it in the Carolingian minuscule and in the black letter, consists of an oval body, an *o*, tied to or followed by a vertical stem going below the line. The only modifications this letter underwent subsequently are such immaterial alterations as resulted from individual caprice.



And so we find ovals with open tops, angular bodies open at the top (sometimes closed with a horizontal stroke, such as we see in the letter *g*), bodies joined to the descending vertical by means of a curved tie, etc. The descender was a straight line or a curved stroke, with or without a foot at its lower extremity, with or without an angular or round terminal serif (No. 7). In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it became more and more frequent to depart from the straight stem and to convert this descender into a partial or complete loop (No. 8). Some common varieties of *q* are shown in No. 9.

Minuscular *q* is most likely to be mistaken for *g*, *h*, *y*, and the figure *9*.

The letters *que* at the end of a word were very frequently, especially in Latin documents, represented by a *q* followed by a character resembling a long-tailed *z* or a *3* which hugged the

stem of the *q* (No. 10). For further details regarding this abbreviation, see p. 127.

Q, majuscular or minuscular, was not always followed by a *u;* not infrequently it stood alone, especially in Latin words, when it stood for *c (k)*; sometimes, especially about the close of the thirteenth century, it was followed by a *v* or a *w* and represented the sound *kw*. In fourteenth and fifteenth century English manuscripts *qu* is often replaced by *ku* and *kw*. *Que* and *quo* often stood for *co* in English words of French origin, as in *quenquest* (conquest), *quod* (cod). After the Norman conquest some writers employed *cw* and *qu* indifferently to express the same sound, but before that the use of *qu* was rare. Up to about 1570 one encounters English manuscripts in which *qu* stands for *wh*, as in *quan* for "when"; the use of *quh* for *wh* persists even later. And, curiously enough, in some documents of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries we find *wh* instead of *qu*, as in *whik* for "quick."

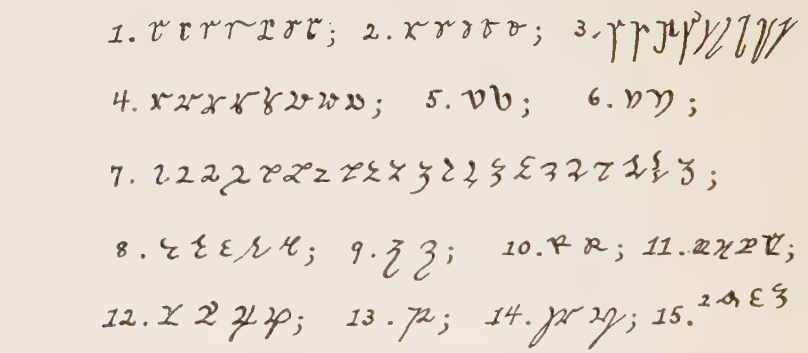
A few English writers all through this period put an accent mark over the *u* following *q*, even though there is no possibility of mistaking this *u* for an *n*.

As an abbreviation, *q* (*Q*) stood for "Queen," "question," "query," *quasi* (as if), *quadrans* (farthing), "quod" (quoth), and for "Cue." This letter often enters into abbreviations in conjunction with other letters: q^r stands for "quarter" or "quire"; *qu* for "query"; *q.s.* for *quantum sufficit* (as much as you wish — often employed by physicians on prescriptions); *q.l.* and *q.p.* for *quantum licet* and *quantum placet* (as much as one pleases); *q.e.* for *quod est* (which is), and the very common *q.v.* for *quod vide* (which see). In medieval notation, *q*, like *d*, stood for "five hundred"; *Q* stood for "five hundred thousand." In the original Greek alphabet the letter koppa, subsequently replaced by kappa, from which *q* developed, stood for "ninety."

Q sometimes took the place of *C* and *K* in certain words taken from Hebrew and Arabic, as, for example, *Quran* for "Koran" and *Quabhalah* for "Cabala."

r

There are probably more varieties of *r* in manuscripts written in the secretary hand than of any other minuscular letter, *s* only excepted. The oldest seems to be the one consisting of a short vertical minim, with or without a round or angular initial serif, and a short, curved, horizontal headpiece to the right of the stem (No. 1), the headpiece being usually a little concave curl which served as the fore-link. If the vertical stem had a short horizontal base, the head-curl was usually made after a



pen-lift; if the stem had no such base-stroke, the writer pushed his pen upward along or near the stem and made the concave or convex curl without a pen-lift (No. 2). This short *r* can be traced back to the Roman cursive of the seventh century, the *R* of which was degenerate, with loop and tail almost completely atrophied.* Not infrequently the stem of this *r* was extended considerably below the base line, thus changing the letter into an infralinear letter and tending to convert it into a kind of undotted *j* (No. 3), the so-called "medieval" *r*. This elongated *r* is not shown in the calligraphic textbooks of the second half of the sixteenth century, though it continued in use for a long time both in England and on the Continent, especially in

* In some twelfth and thirteenth century manuscripts we find a minuscular *r* which is only a capital *R* with a truncated tail (see Alphabets 4 and 6), thus being almost a reversion to one variety of early Greek *R*.

abbreviations. It is to be noted that in this variety of *r* the headpiece was almost as a rule omitted (No. 3).

The short *r* underwent progressive modification. Many penmen made a small convex tie at the base line instead of the normal concave curve, thus producing the most common and the typical variety of secretary *r* (the "twin-stemmed" *r*), the normal *r* in modern German script (No. 4). This form of *r* is said to have been evolved in the fifteenth century.

The last *r* shown in No. 4, a slight modification of the twin-stemmed letter, undoubtedly explains the origin of a variety of *r* (No. 5) which is very common in continental manuscripts throughout the Renaissance, although it is rare in English manuscripts after the fifteenth century. This *r* is often indistinguishable from a secretary *v*. Sooner or later, some writers transformed this into the *r*'s shown in No. 6.

Up to the twelfth century, scriveners employed what is known as the *2*-form of *r* (also known as the "round" *r* and *r* "rotunda") after an *o*, writing the headed *r* everywhere else. After the middle of the fifteenth century these rules were neglected more and more, until finally either *r* was employed in any position in a word and after any letter. How this round *r* came into being can only be conjectured; but it seems highly probable that it is only a normal *r* which has been deprived of its head-curl (No. 7). In fluent penmanship this *r* assumes all sorts of shapes; most of the time it is indistinguishable from an Arabic *2* and a modern lower-case *z*. Needless to say, each one of the three strokes of which it is made up was curved in all sorts of ways, giving us the *r* shown in No. 7. One of the most notable of these is the *r* with the pronounced right-handed curve in its lower half. This *r*, common in fifteenth and sixteenth century manuscripts, looks like an Arabic *3* and is spoken of as the *3*-form of *r*. Our modern left-shouldered *r* (No. 8), or epsilon variety of *r*, is only a variation of these *r*'s.

From the *3*-form of *r* it was an easy step to the *z*-shaped *r* shown in No. 9.

Not a few penmen throughout the Renaissance made a small capital *R* in the place of minuscular *r* (No. 10).

A curious variety of *r* (No. 11) which has puzzled some paleographers was current during a large part of the period we are considering. It is in reality only a current form of the short *r*, the head-curl being turned down to the base line (where it meets the stem) and finished off with a short horizontal flourish. The letter may excusably be regarded as a small and carelessly made *R*. It may easily be mistaken for a variety of *x*.

The *r*'s shown in No. 12, a common enough variety in English documents of the sixteenth century and later, may perhaps most reasonably be regarded as modifications of the *r*'s shown in No. 11, even though the diagonal bisector may have been made last and after a pen-lift.

That the foregoing do not exhaust the varieties of *r* encountered in Renaissance manuscripts is shown by the remarkable *r* (No. 13) found in the fifteenth century (as in the handwriting of Henry V) and in French documents of a much later date.

It may be mentioned as a curious fact that when two *r*'s came together (No. 14) it was not an uncommon practice to employ two different varieties of the letter. No. 13 may be such a double *r*.

Not only is *r* one of the letters most frequently omitted by scriveners, who indicated its omission by writing the succeeding vowel above the line (as in *p*^{i}*ce* for "price"), but it is probably the letter which was most often written above the line, very frequently even when the word containing it was not abbreviated. In the vast majority of instances it was the left-shouldered variety of *r* which was thus elevated above the line, although now and then (especially before the sixteenth century) other varieties of *r* were thus used (No. 15).

Readers of certain fifteenth and sixteenth century English texts must bear in mind that some Scottish writers had not yet abandoned the custom of transposing the letter *r* in certain

words, as in *trage* for "targe," *rehress* for "rehearse," and *scruge* for "scourge."

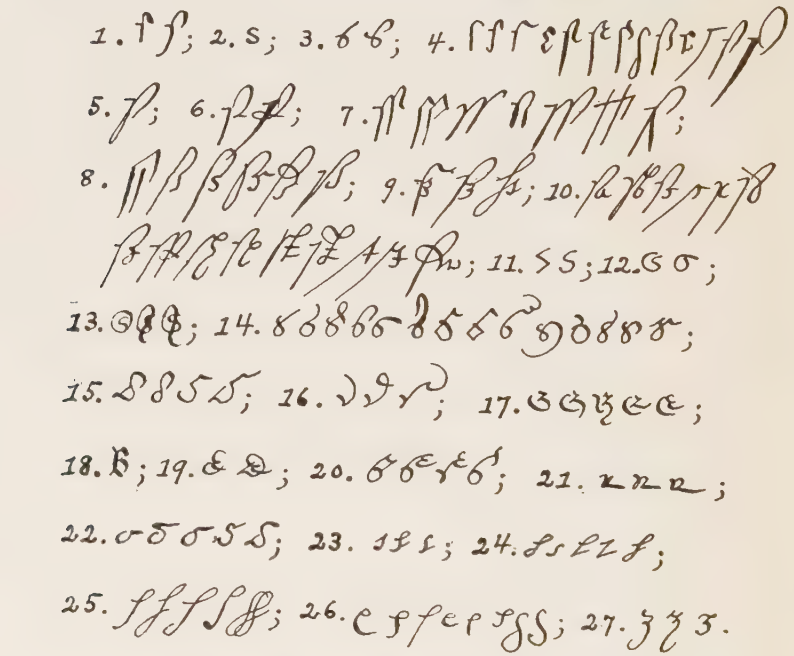
In medieval notation, as in ancient Roman notation, *r* (*R*) stood for "eighty"; a stroke above the *r* converted the symbol into "eighty thousand." As an abbreviation, *R* and *r* stood not only for various proper names, as "Robert," "Richard," etc., but also for certain words, as, for example, "rest" (balance), "right" (as opposed to left), "river," "rogue," "reverend," *rex* (king), *regina* (queen), and *recipe* (take — used thus almost exclusively in medical prescriptions). Followed by other letters, *R* is a constituent of a considerable number of other abbreviations, one of the most interesting of which is a flourished R^r symbol, standing for the Latin word *Recognoscatur* (Be it known, Know ye) at the head of certain legal documents — Shakspere's will, for example.

S

Secretary *s* is probably the most difficult of all the lowercase letters to describe, explain, and — very often — to identify. Even experienced readers of Renaissance manuscripts are often puzzled by it. This is due not merely to the bewildering variety of forms the letter assumed in the hands of lay and professional scriveners but also to the fact that in some hands the *s* was a linear letter, in others a supralinear letter, in still others an infralinear letter, and in yet others a double-length letter.

Disregarding individual modifications, there are, strictly speaking, only two varieties of minuscular *s*, a "long" one (No. 1) and a "short" (or "round") one (No. 2). The former, a very ancient cursive form, appears for the first time in the Roman and in the Irish uncial of the seventh century A.D. In the early Caroline minuscule, long *s*, written on and above the line, was all but universal. It was not until the tenth century that round *s* was beginning to creep into use and then only as a final form, that is, only at the end of a word. But its use in this

way did not become at all common till the twelfth century, although even then many writers used either the long *s* or the round *s* as a final letter. After the thirteenth century, long *s* tends to disappear from the ends of words. On the whole, Elizabethan and Jacobean penmen observed the rule that long *s* was to be used at the beginning and in the middle of words, and a variety of short round *s* (No. 3), resembling our *6*, at the end. But the rule was sometimes disregarded. Queen Eliza-



beth, for example, who prided herself on her penmanship, did not scruple to use the long *s* at the end of a word and the small "final" *s* at the beginning and in the middle of a word. She was not alone in the practice. Only very rarely, however, is long *s* found at the end of a word; for examples of it the student is referred to the manuscript of *The Second Maydens Tragedy*.

Long secretary *s* (No. 1), which is said — on good grounds, no doubt — to be only a round *s* whose lower half has been

compressed into a straight line, consists of a perpendicular stem or shaft and an enlarged serif (to the right of the stem) which serves as a head. Usually the letter has a small tick (or "shoulder") near the head and on the left side of the stem. This tick is said, perhaps fancifully, to be the survival of the tip of the lower curve of the *s*. The shaft may, of course, be long or short, perpendicular or oblique, straight or curved, on the line or below it. The head-curve may be small or large, concave or convex, attached or detached, circular or oval, looped or unlooped (No. 4), etc. Some of these *s*'s differ from *f* only in lacking the crossbar. Usually the long *s* was made with one continuous movement of the pen, the overhead serif being made last and exaggerated into an open ellipse (see the last two *s*'s in No. 4). When hurriedly written, the letter acquired an infralinear loop (No. 5). To link this *s* to a succeeding letter the penman usually drew his quill quickly to the right, without lifting the pen off the tip of the loop, thus supplying the *s* with a horizontal bar and making the letter look exactly like an *f* (No. 6). The confusion between long *s* and *f* is one of the most prolific sources of error in Elizabethan texts. Long *s*, *f*, *st*, and *ft* often look exactly alike.

When these long *s*'s were doubled, they were made by prolonging the descending stroke of the head-curve of the first *s* downward so as to constitute the shaft of the second *s*, and then finishing the second *s* as if it were a single letter (No. 7). Several other ways of writing double *s* are shown in Nos. 8 and 9. In Germany many persons still write double *s* as shown in No. 9 — the first one being a combination of *s* and *z;* the third one, of Roman long *s* and short *s*. The former of these occurs in many old French and German manuscripts.

Long secretary *s* fore-linked with any letter of the alphabet. Some of these liaisons occasionally puzzle modern readers. How these linkings were made is shown in No. 10.

Our round *s* is, as we know, merely a rounded modification of the Greek sigma (No. 11), which originally consisted of three short straight lines meeting in acute angles. The round sigma

(No. 12) is the same letter, the straight strokes being replaced by curves and the head-stroke being made last (somewhat like a reversed *6*). From this "sigma" *s* were developed the following varieties of secretary final *s:*

1. Some penmen made a typical sigma but left it open at the top; others turned the top down in a kind of flourish (No. 13). These are really small capital *S*'s.

2. Others — and now we come to the most usual variety of final *s* — began the letter with the middle one of the three strokes of the angular sigma, turned down and to the left in a right-handed curve, making the base-curve, and then carried this curve up a short distance beyond the point where they had begun (No. 14). The top of the letter was then treated in the usual manner; some curved it around to the left, some to the right; some added bows; some, loops, etc.

3. Needless to say, some writers, mindful only of the general appearance of the letter, rather than of its historical development, reversed the order of the strokes constituting the letter and produced such forms as are shown in No. 15, forms resembling *d*'s and modern *f*'s more than *s*'s. These *d*-shaped *s*'s easily degenerated into the forms shown in No. 16.

4. Another variety of final *s*, known as the "legal" *s*, was made thus: the back curve (the third stroke of the angular sigma) was made first, from above down, and as a left-handed curve; the pen was then raised from the paper, and the upper two strokes of the sigma were ensconced within it (No. 17). This was really only a form of the black-letter *s* (No. 18). When, as was inevitable, the two parts of the legal *s* were made without a pen-lift, the letter assumed the form shown in No. 19, a form very common in the Elizabethan period. Some understandable corruptions of this variety of *s* are shown in No. 20. Sir Edward Dyer made (in 1585) a variety of final *s* (No. 21) — resembling an *n* or a certain variety of *r* — which has proved puzzling; it is probably only a very small *6*-like *s* (with a blind base-loop) whose upper extremity has been brought down to the line and ended with a horizontal flourish.

5. Another variety of final *s* was made by completely reversing the sigma — that is, by making it from below upward (No. 22), somewhat like a secretary *d*.

In addition to the above, there were in general use two varieties of Roman *s*, one short and one long. The small round *s*, as it is called, was made exactly as we make our small script *s* (No. 23), with or without a diagonal upstroke at the beginning and at the end. The terminal upstroke was omitted much more often than the initial one. When both linking strokes are omitted, the small *s* often looks like an *8*, and even more often like a modern German *t*. It is easily mistaken for a *t* or an unaccented *i* (No. 23).

The Roman long *s* (No. 25) is the same letter we have just described, but very much elongated and often looking like a certain variety of secretary (and modern German) *h*. This *s* often goes well above the line, but much more often very much below the line, there curving to the left and ending in a tick, hook, or tail.

A variety of *s* which is of extremely frequent occurrence in sixteenth century manuscripts and later, almost exclusively at the end of a word, is depicted in No. 26.* It consisted of a tiny left-handed circle or bow which terminated in a longish infralinear tail. This tail most often swept around to the right, terminating below the line, but some writers gave it a turn to the left. It is almost unknown as a medial letter and it has no fixed value, sometimes standing for *s* (as in "its"), sometimes *es* (in "mistresses"), sometimes *is* (in the Latin *bovis*), sometimes *ys* (in "beauty's") and sometimes *us* (in *Canutus*). Such an *s* may at times be mistaken for a Roman *e* (if made small), a *t*, or, when made with a final bow or loop, a long vertical *h*. This *s*-symbol was of medieval origin.

In some early eighteenth century manuscripts, as in the Huntington Library's transcript of the anonymous *Arden of*

* In connection with the discussion of a disputed point in one of Shakspere's signatures, it has been asserted that this *s*-symbol never occurs in the middle of a word. That it does so occur is proved by the word "desires" in Thomas Randolph's *Aristippus*, B.M., MS. Sloane 2531, folio 134*a*.

Feversham, there are final *s*'s which are identical with the epsilon variety of *e*.

It is worthy of note that the letter *z* is sometimes used instead of an *s* in French and English documents, mostly at the end of a word. This letter, it may be added, crept into the English alphabet from the French in the fifteenth century. Its form (No. 27) was determined by a desire to distinguish it from *r* rotunda. It is the second *s* in some forms of German double *s* (No. 9).

Some of the above *s*'s may be written in such a manner as to be easily mistaken for *b*, *d*, *h*, *l*, *o*, *t*, and *S*.

The Roman notation of the Middle Ages employed *s* (*S*) for "seven" or "seventy," and $\bar{s}$ ($\bar{S}$) for "seventy thousand."

As an abbreviation, *s* (*S*) stands most often for "shilling," "saint," "scribe," *semi* (half), "south," "sable" and *sinister* (left). "Shilling" or "shillings" was sometimes written ^{sh}. Both in prose and in verse, *sh*, with or without an apostrophe, stood for "she," as in *shas* or *sh'as* for "she has" and *should* for "she should," "she would."

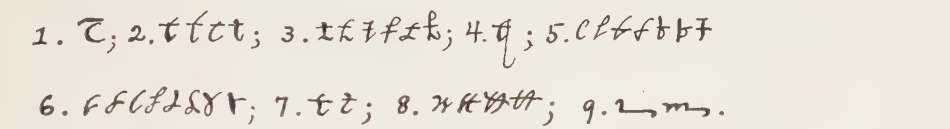
In certain English words, especially in verse, final *s* stands for "is," "has," "us," "was," etc. In German books and documents *s* stands for *siehe* (see), *Seite* (page), and *sein* (his). In French, *s* stands for *siècle* (century). Most often *S* stands as an abbreviation for "Signor," "Sabbath," "Saturday," "Sunday," and names of persons. It also stood for "signature," *sigillum* (seal), and *signa* (label).

t

Minuscular *t* was originally only a small capital *T* (No. 1). Like that letter it was made by writing the horizontal head-bar first, from left to right, and the perpendicular, straight, or convex stem afterwards. Inasmuch as the two strokes were usually made without a pen-lift, the head of the *t* did not project above the crossbar, and consequently the finished letter bore a very close resemblance to a certain variety of *c* (*q.v.*).

It was with the invention of the black letter of the twelfth century that the head of the *t* appeared above the crossbar.

Normally the secretary *t*, like the *c* (which it resembles very closely), is a two-action letter, consisting of a straight or curved vertical stem, convex to the left, and a horizontal crossbar (No. 2). The stem is, on the whole, taller than that of the *c*, is often looped above, rarely curves around to the right (as the *c* often does), and often has a spurred or bowed base line (No. 3). In fourteenth and fifteenth century manuscripts — and in others too, no doubt — *t*'s occur in great abundance which have been decked out with an ornamental curved hair line through the horizontal bar (No. 4). The letter links with a preceding letter by means of the top of its stem, with a



succeeding letter by means of the horizontal bar. Not infrequently, in rapid penmanship, the stem and the crossbar are made without a pen-lift (No. 5), the letter then being easily mistaken for a *b*, a *c*, or even for a *v*.

About the middle of the sixteenth century many writers got into the habit of omitting the crossbar and of fore-linking the looped letter by means of a stroke proceeding from the bottom of the stem upward or laterally (No. 6). Such a *t* may be easily mistaken for an *l*, an undotted *i*, or an *s*.

The habit of indenting the stem produced such a *t* as is shown in No. 7. Two *t*'s coming together often look like *cc*, an *n*, or a *u* (No. 8).

Final *t*, especially in the printed *Caractère de Civilité*, was a very tiny letter, no higher than an *m*-minim, and lacked the crossbar. Coming after an *n* or a *u* such a *t* is easily mistaken for the third minim of an *m* (No. 9).

During most of the three centuries we are considering, scribes frequently employed a *c* in words which we invariably

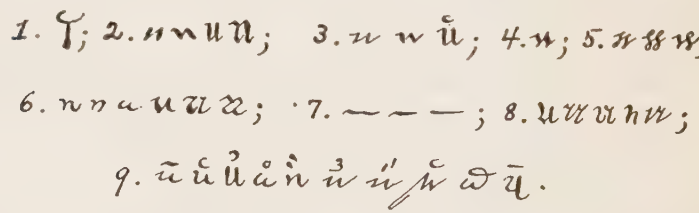
spell with a *t* (such words as *mencion*) — a phenomenon which philologists have no difficulty in explaining. Such a spelling as *nosthril* for "nostril" is an Anglo-Saxon survival; on the other hand, *Anthony* and *apothecary*, for "Antony" and "apotecary," are due to French influence, *th* in France being pronounced *t*.

In medieval Roman notation, *t* (*T*) stood for "one hundred and sixty"; with a horizontal dash over it, for "one hundred and sixty thousand."

As an abbreviation, *t* (*T*) stood for "town," "township," *tempore* (in the time of), *testamentum* (a will), "time," and *tutti* (all), as well as for certain proper names.

U

Historically the letter *u* is intimately bound up with the letters *f*, *v*, *w*, and *y*, all being derived from Phoenician vau



(No. 1). In the early Roman capitals, *V* and *U* were merely graphic variations of the same character,* and minuscular *v* and *u* continued to be so to the sixteenth century. Up to the tenth century most writers preferred the angular form of the letter (*V*, *v*) at the beginning of a word and the uncial (rounded) form (*U*, *u*) within a word, as in *vnburthen*, *aboue*. After that, the letter *v* was appropriated as the symbol of the consonant sound, probably (it is thought) because this sound is more common at the beginning of Latin words, and the letter *u*

* The to us peculiar use of the letters *f*, *v*, and *w* in Old and Middle English and in some Modern English dialects is undoubtedly due to the early history of these letters. In early Latin the symbol *v*, derived from one of the primitive (Egyptian) symbols, stood for the sound now represented by *w*, the sound which *F* (digamma) had in the early Greek alphabet.

became the symbol of the vowel sound within words. But in England the observation of this rule was not at all common till late in the fifteenth century.

Minuscular *u*, an angular letter, is a single-action letter consisting of two short perpendicular or oblique minims tied together by a lighter diagonal stroke from the foot of the first minim to the top of the second minim (No. 2). A fore-linking and a hind-linking diagonal stroke are almost invariably present (No. 3). Some penmen waved the *u*-minims (No. 4) and others tended to loop them (No. 5). In hurried penmanship *u*'s were often rounded above, sometimes below, thus being indistinguishable from *n*'s (No. 6). Careless penmen often treated their *u*'s as they did their *m*'s and *n*'s, converting them into a mere wavy horizontal stroke or a dash (No. 7). Several other varieties of *u* are depicted in No. 8.

The letter *u* is easily mistaken for *a*, *n*, *w*, *tt*, *is*, and even for double-stemmed *r* and small figure-of-eight *s*'s. To distinguish *u* from *n* it was the custom in some of the continental scripts, especially in Germany, to put a dot or an accent or some other mark above the *u* (No. 9). In England this was done but rarely, but it was not uncommon in Scottish hands.

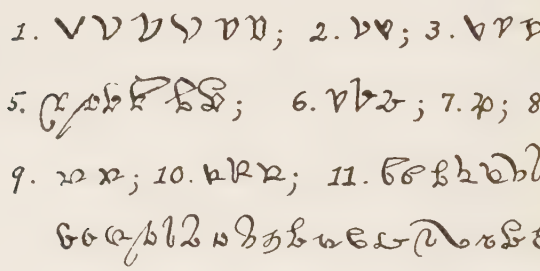
In some English dialects *u* takes the place of *a* in certain words, as in *shul* for "shall."

When one or two *u*'s immediately preceded or followed an *i*, an *m*, or a *u*, the combination of letters often lacked one or two minims. Hence we find, for example, *momtanish* for "mountainish" (mountainous, barbaric) in the manuscript play of *Sir Thomas Moore*. But sometimes a penman would write such a combination of letters with one or two superfluous minims, as in *begininginge* for "beginninge" (in the so-called Vertue Manuscript).

U (*u*) was not often employed as an abbreviation; but when it was it stood for such names as "Uriah" and "Ursula" and for "uncle" and "upper." In German documents *u* is constantly employed for *und* (and) and often for *Uhr* (hour); *u. s. w.* stood (and stands) for *und so weiter* (etc.).

V

Regarding the history of the letter *v* nothing more need be said (see page 76). In Old English texts the letter does not occur, its place being taken by a *w* (in accordance with the original sound of *v*). In the older Teutonic languages there was no *v*-sound at the beginning of words; it is only with the appearance of French influence that initial *v* appears in Middle English words; and even then, and for a considerable period



thereafter, a large number of words that we should expect to have been written with a *v* were written with an *f*, as *fineger* for "vinegar" (an indication, in all probability, of an alternative pronunciation). Though within a word *v* was of frequent occurrence, many persons substituted *f* or *ff* for medial *v* even as late as the sixteenth century. The use of *v* for *w* and, conversely, of *w* for *v*, continues throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in all parts of England.

Small *v* was originally a two-action letter, both strokes being made from above down (No. 1). Subsequently the two limbs of the *v*, one long and one short, were almost as a rule made with one movement of the pen, the one on the right being made from below upward (No. 2). This naturally often resulted in the closure of the letter by the incurving upstroke (No. 3). Almost from the very first, some penmen substituted a convex or a concave curve for the acute angle at the junction of the two limbs (No. 4), the resulting letter often bearing a

close resemblance to a *b*. These *v*'s often had a spur at the base line.

In the thirteenth century writers converted the linear *v* into a supralinear or an infralinear letter by changing the initial diagonal stroke into a loop or by preceding it with a straight or curved ascending stroke (No. 5). The triangular loop of the fourteenth century became as much a part of the *v* as of the *b*, *h*, *k*, etc. But it is not at all unusual to find this initial loop replaced by a hook (No. 6).

Writers on paleographical subjects have made the statement that *v*, like *b*, *o*, and *w*, did not link with a succeeding letter; but the statement is incorrect. One rarely comes across a sixteenth century manuscript whose writer did not fore-link these letters, though his manuscript would have been much easier to read had he not done so.

Careless penmen sometimes made their *v*'s almost exactly like *p*'s, by twisting the right limb around to the left, towards the stem, and then turning it down and carrying it slightly below the line (No. 7).

One of the most important and common modifications of the letter, intended, in all probability, to avoid confusion with *b*, consisted in carrying the right limb up and then turning it to the right and down to the base line near the stem (No. 8). The substitution of a curved tie for the acute angle at the base line resulted in a *v* which is remarkably like a double-stemmed *r* (No. 9). If the stem of the *v* was made vertical the letter often looked like a *k* (No. 10).

A few rather common varieties of *v* are depicted in No. 11. Some of these are excusably mistaken for *b*'s, *h*'s, *k*'s, *l*'s, *o*'s, *p*'s, *r*'s, and even for *to* and *te*.

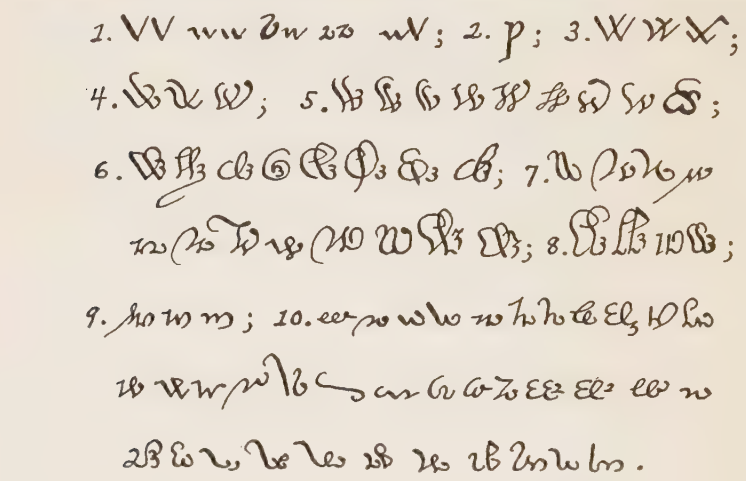
Naturally in those countries — Germany, for example — in which it was customary to put accents and umlauts over *u*'s, it was also the custom to put these marks over *v*'s wherever *v* stood for *u*.

As an abbreviation, *v* (*V*) most frequently stood for the numeral *5;* next in frequency it stood for the words *vide* (see),

vester (your), *votre* (your), *versus* (against), "volume," "verse," "viscount," "venerable," and "village," besides proper names beginning with the letter *V*. In other foreign languages it stood for the words *von* and *van* in proper names.

W

To understand the many and varied uses of the letter *w* in the period we are studying, one needs to know something of



its rather interesting history. In the early Roman alphabets there was no *w*, inasmuch as the Romans originally represented the *w*-sound by a *v* (*u*). Subsequently, in the second century A.D., the Romanic tongues lost this sound, substituting labial spirant *v* for it. When, in the seventh century, the English adopted the Latin alphabet for writing their own language, they found no letter for consonantal *w* (as in the word "we"). Because this sound was almost identical acoustically with devocalized *u*, the sound originally expressed by Roman *U* or *V*, they at first wrote *v* or *u* for *w;* but, apprehending that to do so as a rule would result in ambiguity, they hit on the idea of using two *u*'s (or *v*'s) to indicate the *w*-sound (No. 1). They

did this up to the eighth century, when, for causes now unknown, they discontinued the use of two *u*'s and substituted the Anglo-Saxon wen or wyn (No. 2), a usage which subsequently became almost general.

In the meantime the use of *uu* (*vv*) had crossed the Channel and found its way into certain German dialects and into some French proper names and certain words of Teutonic and Celtic origin. *Uu* for *w* occurs in German documents even in the sixteenth century. Printers continued to use *vv* for *w* till a much later period.

About the middle of the eleventh century some Norman scribe hit on the happy idea of ligating the two *v*'s (No. 3). The resulting character became so popular that by about 1280 it drove the wen wholly out of use.

In Anglo-Saxon English, sounded *w* occurred at the beginning of words not only before vowels, but, in a considerable number of words, before the letters *r* and *l*, as in *wrong*, *wlisp*. The latter spelling and pronunciation became obsolete in the fifteenth century, *wlisp* becoming "lisp"; but in the *wr* words the spelling remained unaltered in standard English, even though the *w* ceased to be sounded (except in some dialects in which the *w* is heard to this day).

Words beginning with the initial sound *hw*, written *hu*, *h* + wen, were also a feature of Anglo-Saxon English. The spelling of these words was subsequently altered to begin with *wh* and wen + *h*. Thus *hwæt* became "what." But, notwithstanding this, we find that cultured sixteenth century Englishmen — who were in the habit of pronouncing initial *wh* as *hw* — sometimes spelled such words with *hw*, as in *hwere* for "where."

Being unable to pronounce Germanic *w*, the Normans substituted the letters *gu*, *gw*, *gv*, *u*, or *ou*, for *w*, thus giving us such words as *guerre* for "war," *gage* for "wage," *guaranty* for "warranty."

In the fifteenth century and for a considerable time thereafter, some scribes wrote *whr* instead of *wr* at the beginning of

certain words, as *whretchedly;* and, *per contra*, others wrote *h* instead of *wh*, as in *hurlpool* for "whirlpool."

Early in the fifteenth century it became customary to write *wh* instead of *h* in Anglo-Saxon words beginning with the sound of *ho*, as in *whom* (for *họ́m*), *wholle* (for O. E. *hál*), *wholy*. Subsequently other words too, of whatever origin, beginning normally with *ho*, were written — blunderingly — with *who*, as *whole* (for O. E. *họ́le*), *whood* (hood), *whore*. Some of these spellings were especially frequent in sixteenth century manuscripts.

From the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, *sw* was often written instead of *su*, as in *swavity*. And some words were still being written with *sw* although the *w* was no longer sounded, as "sword," "answer." Initial *w* in unstressed syllables, as in such words as "housewife," tended more and more to be omitted; thus "housewife" became "hussif" or "huzzy," the spelling following the pronunciation.

In some thirteenth and fourteenth century English manuscripts and in many Scottish and Welsh texts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, *w* replaces *v*, and, perhaps just as often, *v* replaces *w*. From the thirteenth century on, *w* often took the place of *u* in certain vowel digraphs, as in *yow* for "you." Almost throughout the whole of this period many Englishmen and Scotchmen, and Germans too, often wrote a *w* instead of the vowel *u* and for the sound of *oo*, as in *trw* (true), *swth* (sooth), *zw* (*zu*), *tawsend* (*tausend*). This usage probably explains why Thomas Heywood almost invariably wrote *twne* for "towne."

In Scottish manuscripts of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries we often find initial *quh* for *wh* in the words "how," "who," "why," "when," and "where."

Written Gothic *w* is often a very difficult letter to recognize. When penmen took pains to ligate their *v*'s carefully (No. 4) there was, of course, no trouble; but they began very early to substitute curved lines for straight ones and to flourish and wave the constituent strokes, practices which tended to

disguise the letter almost beyond recognition (No. 5). Many penmen failed to complete the first *v* before making the second one; because of this they felt compelled to make two bows after they made the stem of the second *v*. These bows they made with one or with two movements of the pen, from below upward (normally), or from above downward, or one upward and the other downward (No. 6). The left side of the first *v* was often made smaller than that of the second one; in some cases it was so small that it looks like merely an initial hook. In the fifteenth century there seems to have been a sensible attempt to simplify the letter (No. 7), but penmen soon reverted to their old bad habits. Straight strokes were converted into right-handed or left-handed curves, and the first *v* was deprived of its terminal bow. Not infrequently the terminal bows of the two *v*'s were replaced by a figure resembling the letter *z*, tailed or untailed (see the second *w* in No. 6 and the eleventh in No. 7). The two *v*'s were often intertwined but not actually linked together (No. 8). And, of course, the final bow was often replaced by a descending right-handed curve (No. 9).

In hurried writing, especially in the sixteenth century, *w* assumed forms like those shown in No. 10. It would be vain to attempt to identify the constituent *v*'s in some of these *w*'s.

W's, small and large, are most easily mistaken for *m*'s, *n*'s, *u*'s (*v*'s), as well as for *ic*, *ie*, *ir*, *lb*, *le*, *ll*, *lv*, *uc*, *ro*, *rv*, *tr*, etc.

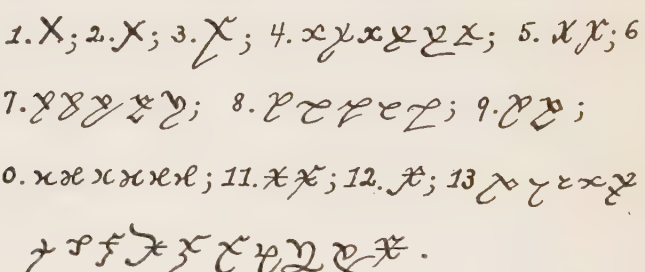
As an abbreviation, *W* (*w*) stood for baptismal names beginning with that letter, as "William," "Walter," and *Wilhelm*, as well as for "with," "wide," "width," "wert," "western," "Welsh," "Wednesday," "wife," etc.

X

In modern English the letter *x* stands for all of the following sounds: *ks* (in "box"), *gz* (in "exact"), *z* (in "xanthous"), and *ksh* (in "anxious"). In certain foreign names it also stands for *h*, *ch*, and *sh*. The Anglo-Saxons often wrote an *x* instead of *cs* in the middle and at the end of certain words, as

in *axian* for *acsian* (ask). During the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries many Englishmen wrote either *x* or *xs* instead of initial *sh* and *sch*, as in *xal* for "shall," especially in early forms of some oriental words, as *xerif* for "shereef." Also within a word, *x* for *xc* occurs, as in *exelent* for "excellent." On the other hand some persons wrote a *z*, a *c*, or an *s* instead of *x*, as in *Zanctus* for "Xanthus," *Santippe* for "Xantippe," *Cerses* for "Xerxes."

The earliest form of *X*, a linear letter, consisted of two oblique lines, both made from above downward and crossing



each other (No. 1). As early as the seventh century, in the Roman uncial, penmen began to curve the second of these strokes and to extend it slightly below the line and to the left (No. 2). Gradually this foot tended to get longer and longer; by the thirteenth century it developed into quite a tail (No. 3) in the hands of some writers. In the meantime it had become customary to curve both diagonals and to impart hooks or serifs to them (No. 4). For a long time it was customary to replace the first diagonal by a heavy vertical stroke and to make the second one very light, with a heavy serif at its head and a sharp hook at its foot (No. 5). This *x* is easily mistaken for an *r*. It would be difficult to say when penmen first began to make an *x* of two curves addorsed (No. 6).

The subsequent modifications of the *x* resulted from the growing tendency to make the two diagonals and the infralinear tail without a pen-lift. At first, penmen did this by moving

the point of the pen up along the first diagonal a short distance before making the right-handed curve which serves as a head for the second diagonal (No. 7). In these cases the tail sometimes went up to meet the foot of the first diagonal and sometimes went up beyond it (No. 7). These *x*'s often look like *y*'s. Subsequently, especially in the fifteenth century, more fluent penmanship led some writers to make their *x* by the more speedy process of linking the second diagonal to the first by a left-handed turn from the foot of the first to the head of the second (No. 8). This became the prevalent *x* for all the rest of the period during which the Gothic script was being written, even though it is easily mistaken for a *p* or an *h*. In these *x*'s many writers made the tail of the letter with a separate movement of the pen (No. 9), the first diagonal being replaced by a concave or a convex curve or by a waved minim. Spurs, above or below the line, were added occasionally, of course.

Writers who made their *x*'s of two addorsed curves sometimes left a little space between them and sometimes tried to make them without a pen-lift, giving us such *x*'s as are shown in No. 10. These are easily mistaken for *n*, *r*, *ie*, *is*, *te*, or *ts*.

In many foreign documents, and also in some English manuscripts, the letter *x* contains a short horizontal bisector (No. 11). We may conjecture that this cross-stroke resulted from an earlier flourished initiator of the head of the second diagonal (No. 12). But it is not impossible that the cross-stroke was added to distinguish *x* from *r*.

A few common varieties of *x* are depicted in No. 13.

With regard to the *x* it is worth remembering that this letter was part of the chrismon, the Greek monogram of the word "Christ," and that one or two *x*'s often stood for the syllable *Chris* in the name "Christopher." "December" was sometimes written *xber*, the *x* standing for *decem*.

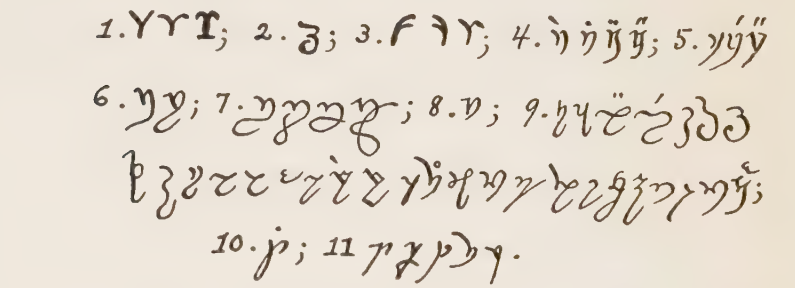
In Roman notation, *X*, like *x*, stands for "ten"; with a dash over it, *X* stands for "ten thousand"; laid horizontally (⋈), it, like *m*, stands for "one thousand."

As an abbreviation, *X* stands most frequently for the

syllable "Christ" (hence *Xmas* for "Christmas," *Xn* for "Christian," *Xtity* for "Christianity"). To understand why Englishmen often wrote *Xpofer*, *Xper*, or *Xpr* for "Christopher," it needs only be remembered that uncultured persons mistook the second letter (a Greek ρ) in the chrismon for a *p*.

y

Some paleographers have considered the letter *y* as being only a combination of two *i*'s or an *i* and a *j*. That this view is incorrect and that the letter is derived from the ancient Greek upsilon (No. 1), derived from primitive *V*, is clear from



the fact that in several foreign languages it bears a name significant of this origin. The French call it *i grec*, the Spanish *i griega*, the Germans and the Italians *ipsilon*. In English words of Greek origin it is still customary to represent the original *u* by a *y*. The earliest use of it by the English appears to have been about A.D. 1200 as a substitute for the runic thorn. But later on, in the "semi-Saxon" period and thereafter, *y* was written for *i* and for rounded (French and German) *i* (*ü*), a usage which continued in Germany for a much longer time than in England, although the English continued to use *y* for the vowel *i* in any part of a word throughout the Middle English period. In some French documents *y*, usually dotted, stands for *ui* and *au*.

Other English uses of *y* must be mentioned. In some texts

y, like *g*, served to express the sound of *j* (as in "jar"), as in the words *manyour* for French *maniour* (manger), *yyoyned* for *yioyned* (joined), *yoye* for "joy," *yolye* for "jolly," *yelowse* for "jealous."

About A.D. 1250, writers began to use the letter *y* for the Anglo-Saxon yogh, a z-like *g* (No. 2), representing a guttural *g*-sound which was peculiar to the speech of the English, as in *inouȝ* for Old English *genóh* (enough), *niȝt* for *niht* ("nicht," not). About half a century later some scribes discarded the use of the yogh altogether, substituting *y* (or *yh*) for it. It is rare in English manuscripts of the sixteenth century, but the Scotch continued to use it, in the shape of the letter *z*, for some time longer, and to this day some Scotch words, especially surnames — "Menzies," for example — use a *z* instead of a *y*. One even finds "tailor" written *taylzor* and other spellings of the kind.

In some English manuscripts the *y* is used exclusively as a vowel, most often for *i*, less often for *e;* but most penmen used it also as a consonant. Northern scribes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries often wrote *yh* for initial *y*, as in *yhit* for "yet," *yher* for "year." Many Englishmen habitually inserted a *y* into certain words (as *theym* for "them," *kyepyng* for "keeping") in which it appears wholly unnecessary today.

When scanning English verse, it is well to remember that poets often treated the letter *y* as a consonant when it came at the end of one word and before a word beginning with a vowel; consequently they treated such combinations as "many a" and "glory of" as being dissyllabic. Dissyllabic "many a" may be a survival of the Middle English practice of speaking and writing "many one" as one word, *manyon*. Punctilious and scholarly Ben Jonson did this, in his *Masque of Queenes*, even when the two words were separated by a comma, as in the line "The Worthiest Queene: These w^{t}hout envy,' on her", indicating the fusion of the *y* and the succeeding vowel by an intervening apostrophe. This use of final *y* is of frequent occurrence in the Shakspere canon.

By the fourteenth century *y* and runic thorn had become

indistinguishable from each other in form. After 1400 the thorn fell more and more out of use, but was represented in some scripts by the letter *y* in the compendia y^e, y^t, y^{is}, y^{ei}, y^m, y^{an}, y^r, for "the," "that," "this," "they," "them," "than," and "their" (not "your"). Some penmen wrote y^e for "they" and even y^{ts} for "that's." Many of these abbreviations continued in common use in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; y^e (erroneously pronounced *ye*) for "the" was in general use in the nineteenth century, and is still being written for archaic and comic effects.

Originally English writers took the liberty of turning the upper limbs of the letter either to the right or to the left or in opposite directions (No. 3). The type with the limbs turned to the left (the second one in No. 3) became general in the Middle English period. Some early penmen made the letter as if it consisted of two *i*'s or an *i* and a *j* (No. 4). Very soon, in the thirteenth century, it became customary to carry the right half of the letter considerably below the line and to swing it leftward (No. 5), the second stroke meeting the first at its foot. Initial and terminal serifs appear very early. All during this period and for several centuries later it was customary with many penmen to put one or, less often, two dots or accents over their *y*'s. Why they did this is not known; but it is certain that some writers attempted in this way to distinguish *y* from thorn.

The commonest form of *y* (No. 6) met with all during the period we are studying consists of the *y* shown in No. 5 but modified by the addition of a rounded head to the second one of the two main strokes constituting the letter. This rounded head is made by carrying the pen up and towards the right from the foot of the first (the left oblique) limb of the *y* and then turning down to the base line. From this point the pen is carried below the line a variable distance and flourished in various ways to suit the taste of the writer (No. 7). If the tail is very short, like a spur, the letter resembles a *v* (No. 8).

The normal *y* shown in Nos. 6 and 7 was modified by suc-

cessive generations of penmen in all of the ways mentioned in Chapter II: serifs were replaced by hooks or curves; straight strokes by curved ones; convex curves by horizontal, straight, or curved ties; vertical strokes by horizontal ones; long strokes by short ones; curved strokes by straight ones, etc. In this way were produced the *y*'s shown in No. 9. Some of these may easily be mistaken for *n*, *g*, *h*, *x*, *p*, *ii*, *ij*, etc.

Very rarely some penman omitted the head of the *y*, producing a letter (No. 10) which can be identified only by the context. It was the straight *y* with the rounded head which was identified with a debased form of thorn (No. 11). Needless to say, some writers substituted a left-handed curve for the right-handed head, thus producing a letter which is indistinguishable from a certain variety of *x* (see the eighth *y* in No. 9).

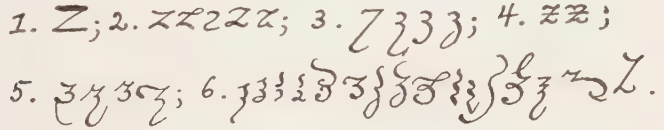
At the end of a word *y* was often made so carelessly that it looks like only a tail-like flourish.

In medieval notation, *y* (*Y*) stood for "one hundred and fifty"; with a dash over it, it stood for "one hundred and fifty thousand."

As an abbreviation, *y* (*Y*) seems to have stood usually for the word "year."

Z

Regarding the history of the letter *z*, a comparatively rare letter in printed English, there is not much to be said. It was



one of the last letters to be introduced into the English language, being found only occasionally in the Anglo-Saxon of the tenth century. About the middle of the fourteenth century it became rather common in England and in France. At first — that is, in Old and Early Middle English — *z*, with or without a

preceding *d* or *t*, was used in the spelling of words of alien origin and was sounded *ts*. (The Germans sometimes indicated the same sound by writing *cz*, as in *czeit;* the French preferred *ts*, especially at the end of a word.) By the end of the thirteenth century, the English, following French example, pronounced *z* as sonant *s* (as in "zone"), a usage which by the end of the fourteenth century had become general. The English of the sixteenth century, unlike their continental neighbors, seem to have found it difficult to write a *z* rapidly and legibly; and consequently they tended more and more to substitute an *s* for a *z* in many words which today are written with a *z*, as *gase, amase.* The Germans, French, and Italians used the *z* very frequently. In Scotland, owing to confusion between tailed *z* and the *z*-like *y*, many persons represented both sounds by the same character; in this way *z* gradually displaced *y* from certain proper names and other words, though the *z* continued to be pronounced *y*.

Zh (sonant *sh*), the sound of *z* in "azure," one of the rarest sounds in the English language, seems to have originated in the seventeenth century. The earliest mention of it is said to be in 1688.

Originally, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the letter *z* consisted of two short, straight, horizontal strokes, one above the other, joined by a diagonal stroke from above down and from right to left (No. 1). In hurried writing the horizontal strokes became slightly concave or convex and the acute angles were replaced by curves (No. 2); such *z*'s were easily mistaken for *i*'s and for rounded *r*'s. To avoid errors penmen seem to have found it necessary to modify the *z;* towards the end of the thirteenth century they began to extend this letter below the line. It was inevitable that this infralinear extension would develop into a tail and ultimately into a loop (No. 3). And so we find that in manuscripts of 1300 onwards there are two characters — a tailed *z* and a certain variety of *y* (the yogh) — which are ordinarily indistinguishable from each other. But the capital *Z*, a rare letter, retained its Roman form. In some

foreign countries, especially in Germany, many penmen introduced a horizontal crossbar into the *z*, probably to distinguish it from *r*. This crossbar is present in the black letter (No. 4).

The addition of initial upstrokes or overhead curves (No. 5) tended further to modify the ancient form of the letter. Some penmen seemed to like to play with the *z;* but, notwithstanding this, this letter rarely offers difficulties to the modern reader of old manuscripts. The only characters for which a *z* may ordinarily be mistaken are *i*, *r*, small *L*, *y*, and the figure *2*. It was often made exactly like the abbreviations *-us* and *-et* (*q. v.*).

A few common varieties of *z* are depicted in No. 6.

As an abbreviation, *z* (*Z*) indicates certain proper names; but in Germany it is used also as an abbreviation for the words *zu* (to), *Zoll* (inch), and *Zeile* (line).

In medieval notation, *z* (*Z*) stood for "two thousand"; a dash above the *Z* converted it into a symbol for "two million."

Chapter IV

THE MAJUSCULES

The majuscules or capital letters were much less frequently employed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries than they are with us. It is not until the Jacobean era that their use becomes at all common or consistent. Elizabethan and earlier penmen felt no necessity to begin a paragraph with a capital letter; most often they began names of towns, countries, rivers, and persons, and even their own names, with minuscular letters. Even where a penman wrote his Christian name with a capital initial letter, he not infrequently began his surname with a minuscule. Lines of verse were rarely begun with capital letters, and even those poets (as Philip Massinger and the author of *The Return from Parnassus*) who seemed to think that a line of poetry ought to begin with a capital letter were not consistent in the practice. Very often majuscules were employed mainly as an ornamental device, probably because they lent themselves to floriation.

Many writers have called attention to the fact that Elizabethan and earlier scribes sometimes wrote a double minuscule instead of a majuscule, as *ll* and *ff*, especially the latter, instead of capital *L* and capital *F*. But this was also done — by John Fletcher, for example — where a capital letter is not required even by our standard. In one of Villon's printed poems we find *aage*. What has not heretofore been noticed is that some penmen who wrote the secretary hand sometimes employed both the majuscule and the minuscule where a capital letter was wanted. In the manuscript of *Sir Thomas Moore* the unknown author of "the Addition" wrote *Bbeff* for "beef"; in a warrant signed by King Henry VIII on December 13, 1513,

the name of one of the yeoman ushers is written *Laurens Gglissolde;* and in at least two official documents proper names beginning with *F* are written with *Ff*. Some penmen doubled even their capital letters; thus, for example, the poet John Lyly wrote his first name *Jfhon*.

Some scholars have championed a theory that in the text of Shakspere's plays, as published in the First Folio and in some of the quartos, the use of capitals was determined by a desire to distinguish emphatic words. There is, however, no truth in this theory of "emphasis capitals." Elizabethan and Jacobean printers in England, as their contemporaries on the Continent, almost invariably employed capital letters as the initials of proper and common nouns — a practice which is still current in Germany. Many printers also capitalized words of foreign extraction and words that seemed to be so; terms of art; words borrowed from the learned professions, especially legal terms; titles of dignity; the names of the seasons and of cosmic processes; words borrowed from the trades, the sciences, and the pseudo-sciences; personifications; names of animals and plants used emblematically, proverbially, or typically; heraldic terms; and so forth.* There can be very little question, too, that in many instances compositors employed capital letters for their artistic effect as well as for the purpose of filling out a line so as to make it unnecessary to divide a word, with or without a hyphen, at the end of a line. It must therefore have happened often that an emphatic word was printed with a capital initial. That this was quite fortuitous, not intentional, is sufficiently proved by the following considerations: (1) in every play there are innumerable sentences in which emphatic words are not distinguished by being printed with a capital letter; (2) very many unemphatic words are printed with capital letters; and (3) extant manuscripts of dramas, even "the Addition" in the play of *Sir Thomas Moore*, show no evidence of emphasis capitals. (See page 151.) At the end of the third quarter of

* For a discussion of some of these, see George Wyndham's edition of *The Poems of Shakespeare*, 1898, pages 259–265.

the eighteenth century, English printers discontinued the practice of printing substantives with capital initials.

The salient characteristics of the script capitals may be explained by reference to black-letter fonts of type employed by early printers. Prior to the invention of a more cursive script — in which individual letters slanted somewhat to the right, were provided with connecting strokes, and were written without any pen-lifts — penmen imitated the printed letters. This is strikingly shown not only in the structure of the letters, but even more so in their ornamentation.

One way of decorating capital letters was by the introduction into them of one or two strokes running from above downward and usually extending well above and below the letter; sometimes these strokes stopped about the middle of the letter. They were usually oblique; in the hands of professional scribes they were perhaps more often perpendicular. In addition to these, many writers introduced one or two short horizontal strokes, usually parallel to the base line, especially if the letter also had a vertical stroke. Now and then a penman would bisect a letter with this vertical stroke and then insert one or two short horizontal strokes to one side of it and one or two on the other side. (See page 19, No. 7.) It is important to remember that these strokes were not essential parts of the letters.

Another decorative feature of the majuscules was the introduction of an unnecessary dot somewhere within one of the loops or between the minims of the letters. These dots also appear in the black letter of some printers. The habit of introducing these dots persisted till well into the seventeenth century. Some penmen seem never to have employed them, whereas others employed them a great deal. Some students of Elizabethan literature have mistaken these dots for misplaced *i*-dots and others have regarded them, mistakenly, for characteristics of the legal scrivener. Paleographers have hitherto failed to note that some penmen introduced even two dots into a single letter; there are, for example, two dots in a *B* and in a

G in S. P. Domestic, Elizabeth, vol. 226, fo. 274, in a *B* in the manuscript of *The Return from Parnassus* (in the word *Bracchidochio*, line 1235); and in the *W* of William Shakspere's signature on the flyleaf of a copy of the first English edition of Montaigne's *Essaies* now in the British Museum.

Another common decorative feature was the addition of one or two little curls to or near the upper end of certain letters, as *C*, *G*, and *S*. Some letters — the *L*, for example — had a short compound curve tacked on somewhere near their heads. Others, as *F* and *I*, had a long, fine, straight or slightly curved vertical stroke just to the right of the stem. Almost any capital letter could be terminated by the addition of a straight or curved, shorter or longer, hair stroke. For other decorative features in capital letters the student is referred to Mr. Hilary Jenkinson's splendid work, *The Later Court Hands in England*.

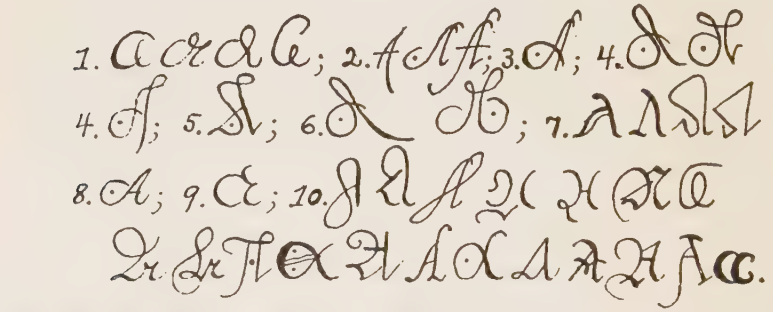
In the study of the majuscules it must be borne in mind that in writing the secretary hand a penman had the privilege of making as many pen-lifts as he pleased — that is, of making any constituent element of a letter in as many sections as his fancy dictated, or of making as many of the essential elements as he pleased with one continuous movement, or even of converting a curved stroke into a succession of short straight lines. Apparently all that was of any importance was that the finished product should bear some resemblance to the letter it was intended to represent.

After these preliminary remarks we may proceed to the description of the individual letters.

A

A capital *A* is often nothing more than a minuscular *a* written large (No. 1). The simplest *A* (No. 2) is a double-action letter and resembles a crude drawing of a pair of compasses, one limb being usually longer and more curved than the other. The left leg of the compass is very apt to terminate with a sweeping right-handed curve in such a manner that its

final portion constitutes the crossbar of the *A*, although the crossbar is not an essential part of the secretary *A* and is often omitted (No. 3). Very often *A* is made from left to right and with one pen-stroke (No. 4). The initial stroke is often supplied with a spur (No. 5). An ornamental dot in the initial or terminal loop or bow is a conspicuous feature in the writing of many penmen (No. 6). Writers of the secretary hand were very fond of converting the curve at the transition from an ascending stroke to a descending one, or from a descending stroke to an ascending one, into a small or large, horizontal,



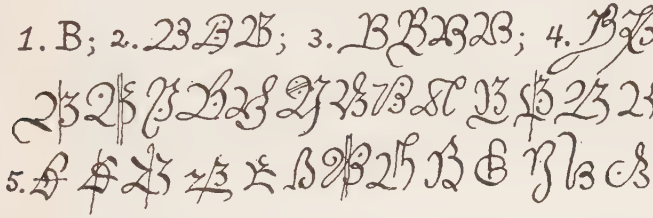
curved tie, with a small or large bow at either end or at both ends. This habit resulted in such *A*'s as are shown in Nos. 1, 4, 5, 6, and 10. That in this way letters might be so distorted as to be almost unrecognizable must be evident. Early varieties of *A* are shown in No. 7. Such a modern-looking *A* as is shown in No. 8 occurs very rarely (*c.* 1560). A freakish-looking *A*, made by the poet Dyer, is shown in No. 9. Other varieties of *A* met with in England and on the Continent are depicted in No. 10.

A may be written so as to be mistaken for *sv*, *db*, *dl*, *di*, *st*, *D*, *H*, *N*, etc.

B

Roughly speaking, it may be said that a *B* is a supralinear letter which consists of a perpendicular stem having two semicircles, one directly above the other, to the right of the vertical

stem (No. 1). In the black-letter font, and consequently in the Renaissance secretary, this ideal pattern was modified and altered in many ways. Most often the vertical stem was converted into a sort of large *2* and the two semicircles into a kind of large *3*. Usually the lower end of the "3" was made to meet the "2" at the right end of its base (No. 2). If the penman made both these elements without a pen-lift, the resulting letter took on the shape shown in No. 3. The vertical stem might be distorted in various ways at the top as well as at the bottom; this was true also of the curves to the right of this stem. In this way such *B*'s as are depicted in No. 4 came about. Some

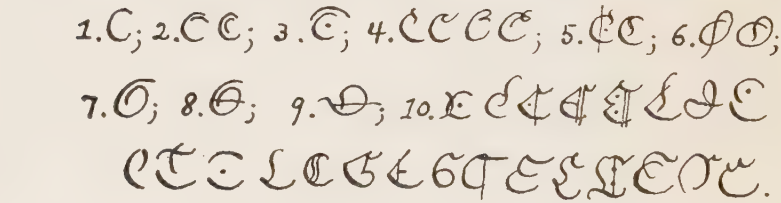


curious *B*'s are shown in No. 5. The introduction of vertical strokes and of dots for ornamental purposes served to complicate the picture.

C

The letter *C*, a linear letter, was essentially a left-handed semicircle, open on the right side (No. 1). To ornament it some penmen inserted a smaller or larger curve within the letter, near its head and running parallel to its dorsum (No. 2); others put the curve on the outside (No. 3); others finished the letter, made a pen-lift, and then added a little curved serif or whorl to the head of the *C* (No. 4). Some added an ornamental dot with or without one or two vertical bisectors (No. 5). Some penmen did all these things. Because of a tendency to make the vertical bisector continuously with the letter itself, that is, without a pen-lift, the *C* acquired the appearance shown in No. 6, a very common variety of the letter. In these cases the diagonal often terminated within the letter (No. 6). Many

penmen made the left side of the letter taller than the right side, thus producing the *C* shown in No. 7; when this happened many writers thought it necessary to draw a horizontal stroke through the *C* (No. 8); this horizontal stroke then served as the connecting stroke for the succeeding letter. The *C* shown in No. 6 was often made in the reversed direction, the way we make a script *I;* in that case the horizontal terminal served as the connecting link. Many who made the *C* shown in No. 6 made it with an initial right-handed serif instead of the left-handed initial curve (No. 9); in these cases they almost always



inserted a horizontal stroke near the base line. Some unusual varieties of *C* are shown in No. 10.

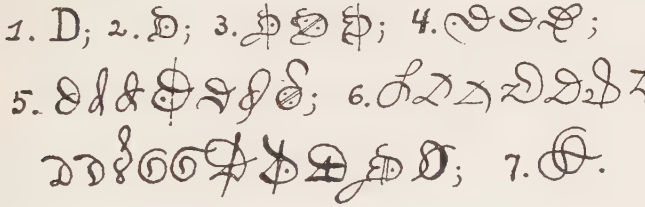
A *C* is perhaps the most common majuscule to be found in Elizabethan and Jacobean documents; in fact, it occurs even in the middle of words (as in *hypoCriticall*), probably because penmen found that the minuscular *c* was too often mistaken for other letters. But it must be remembered that some writers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw nothing wrong in introducing any majuscules into their words.

C may be mistaken for *E*, *G*, *L*, *S*, and *T*.

D

A Roman *D* was a semicircle which was closed on the left side with a vertical line (No. 1). Monkish fancy converted this into a black-letter character by substituting one or two compound curves for the perpendicular stroke and by attaching a curved serif to both ends of the semicircle (No. 2). This letter

was made from above downward or from below upward. An ornamental dot or two and one or two vertical bisectors, occasionally supplemented by one or two short oblique horizontal strokes, were often conspicuous features of this letter (No. 3). Sooner or later some venturesome scribe omitted the vertical stroke altogether and enlarged the initial curve, thus producing the most common *D* found in old manuscripts (No. 4). Converting the initial curve into a left-handed curve tended to the production of such *D*'s as are shown in No. 5. A few unusual varieties of *D* appear in No. 6. In many instances a



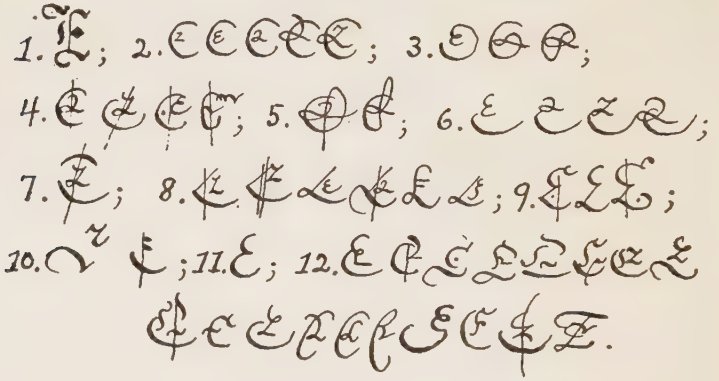
D is indistinguishable from a *d*. That the letter may easily be mistaken for other letters goes without saying.

A very common abbreviation for *De* is shown in No. 7.

E

In some hands the secretary *E* is one of the most difficult of all the letters to recognize. Scribes played almost every imaginable trick with it. In the black-letter character which was developed from the Roman (lapidary) *E* the following changes were wrought: parallel curves were substituted for the horizontal head and base, the lower curve being the conventional right-handed curve (an incomplete oval); a short heavily shaded compound curve was placed just to the left of the light stem, and this was surmounted by a small right-handed incomplete oval, the counterpart of the base; for the short horizontal rod or crossbar which projected from the center of the stem, a small lozenge-shaped figure was substituted (No. 1). In cur-

sive writing a semilunar curve was substituted for the stem, the head, and the base of the letter; the lozenge was replaced by a figure resembling a small *2* or a *z*, which was almost invariably made after a pen-lift and did or did not meet the stem (No. 2). This was the typical secretary *E*. Many penmen made the letter without a pen-lift (No. 3); many others inserted the usual one or two vertical strokes (No. 4). Dots were not often to be found in *E*'s, the letter being sufficiently

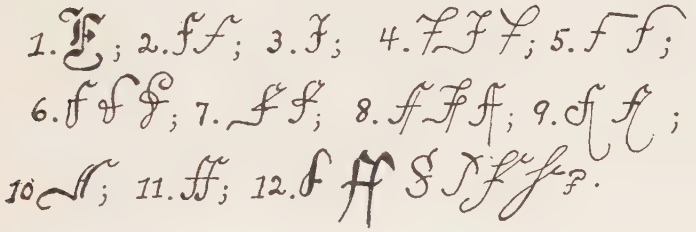


complicated without them. Many penmen, of course, made the *E* with the vertical bisector with only one pen-lift (No. 5). In some hands the crescent stem was reduced to merely a horizontal arc (No. 6); in others it was divided into two arcs (No. 7); others converted it into a sort of scythe-like figure (No. 8); in the hands of others the curved part of the stroke was above and the straight part below (No. 9). An unusual variety of *E* was made by omitting the upper half of what should have been the crescent (No. 10). From the *E*'s shown in No. 9 it was an obvious step to the modern *E* (No. 11). Some common varieties of *E* met with in sixteenth century manuscripts are shown in No. 12. In essentials *E* is only an enlarged *e* (*q.v.*).

Some *E*'s may be mistaken for *C*'s and others for *L*'s; some can be identified only by the context.

F

The Roman lapidary *F*, from which the secretary letter was ultimately developed, consisted of three parts: a perpendicular stem, a horizontal head, and a short horizontal crossbar about the middle of the stem. The monks converted this into black letter by adding the customary heavily shaded semioval base, an initial head-curve on the left side of the stem, a heavily shaded, curved, vertical rod to the left of the stem, converting the crossbar into the characteristic lozenge and imparting a curve to the straight head-stroke (No. 1). In the script



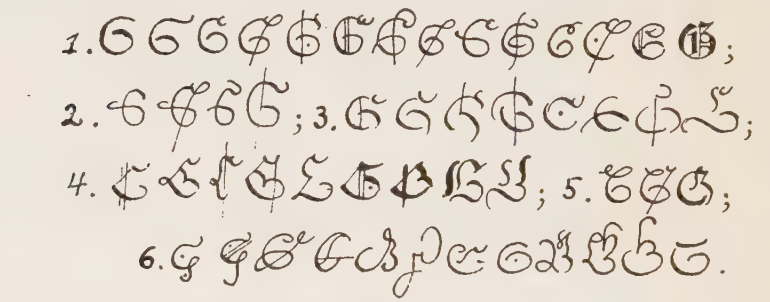
alphabet — in those rare instances in which a capital *F* was employed — the stem became a vertical compound curve, resembling a long Italian *s*, and the head-stroke became a serif. The resulting letter is shown in No. 2. Many penmen put the head-serif to the left of the stem (No. 3). It was a common trick to prolong the base to the left or to omit it wholly (No. 4). Now and then the head-stroke was elongated (No. 5). If the letter was made without a pen-lift, it looked like those shown in No. 6. Sometimes the head-stroke and the crossbar were made continuously (No. 7). One of the commonest ways of adorning a script *F* was by drawing a long hair stroke just to the right of the stem and approximately parallel to it (No. 8), although the superfluous hair stroke might sometimes be a left-handed flourish (No. 9). A freakish *F* is shown in No. 10. That most often a majuscular *F* was replaced by two *f*'s has already been pointed out. Some penmen doubled even their

capital *F*'s (No. 11). A few uncommon varieties of *F* are shown in No. 12.

F's may easily be mistaken for *A*'s, *H*'s, *I*'s, and *J*'s, especially if — as often happened — they were prolonged below the line.

G

It would be practically impossible to describe within appropriate limits all the forms the letter *G* assumed in the secretary hand. Very often only the context enables one to



say whether a given letter is a *G* or a *C*, although in theory these letters may be distinguished from each other by the fact that in the former, a derivative of the Roman *C*, the lower end of the crescent or semicircle constituting the main part of the letter turns upward and backward (No. 1). At its simplest the letter looks much like a large *6*. The enlargement of the head-curve, the addition of an initial serif (which, of course, may be made last), and the addition of vertical and horizontal ornamental strokes, together with the occasional addition of dots, produced such *G*'s as are depicted in No. 1 — the most common variety of *G* occurring in Renaissance documents.

Some penmen made the letter from below upward (No. 2), exactly as they did their *S*. Others divided the crescent into two parts (No. 3); and not a few, actuated by an artistic impulse, distorted the crescent in the manner we have pointed out in the discussion of the letter *C* (No. 4). Some unusual *G*'s

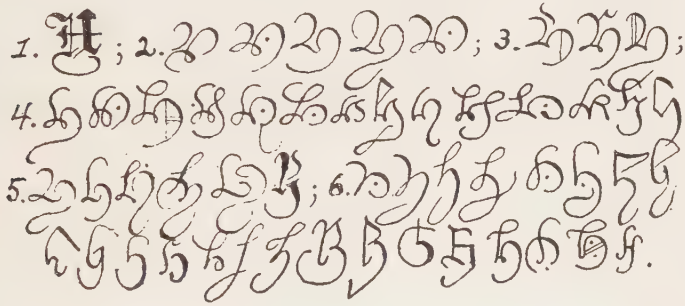
are shown in No. 6. The black-letter *G* is shown at the end of No. 1.

Instead of a *G* at the beginning of certain words, especially in legal documents, we not infrequently find a *Y* (*Yeven* for "Given"); this is really not a *Y* but a substitute for Anglo-Saxon gifu. Even in Caxton's 1476 edition of Chaucer we find *g* replaced by a *y* in the word *yeue* (give).

G may be mistaken for *C*, *E*, *L*, *S*, and *T*.

H

Though at first glance there seems to be no resemblance between the black-letter *H* (No. 1) and the secretary *H*, there



is no doubt that the latter is only an outgrowth from and modification of the former. The Roman letter consisted of two perpendicular stems united to each other by a horizontal cross-bar at their center. In the black letter these elements are retained, of course, but are modified in the usual manner: by the addition of a head-curl to the left of the first stem, the addition of a larger foot-curl (an incomplete horizontal oval) to the left of the foot of this stem, the addition of the heavily shaded vertical rod just to the left of this stem, and the decoration of the second stem by the addition of a lozenge-shaped figure at each of its extremities. In the Gothic script which developed into the secretary hand the essentials of this letter

were retained, but curves were substituted for the straight strokes and the attempt was made to write the whole letter with one or only two movements of the pen (No. 2). The foot-curl was almost wholly lost, the crossbar became a tie between two adjoining curves, and the curved stem on the right acquired a flourished tail which often went below the line (No. 3). Ornamental dots, vertical and horizontal bars, serifs, and curlicues were of course not omitted. But what tended most to complicate and disguise the *H* was the habit of converting the initial right-handed curve into a left-handed one (No. 4). Many penmen made the *H* almost unrecognizable by introducing a pen-lift after they had finished the first half of the letter (No. 5). Other penmen achieved the same result by omitting the curved tie and making the skeleton of the letter with one pen-movement (No. 6).

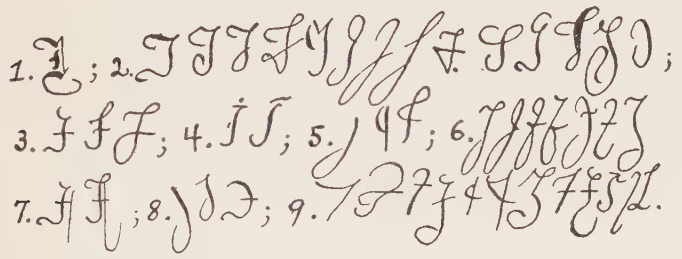
H, as made by some penmen, might be mistaken for *B*, *G*, *J*, *N*, *S*, *V*, and *Y*.

I, J

It is only since 1808 that tables of the English alphabet treat *I* and *J* as separate letters. Up to then they had been regarded as one letter, both standing for vowel *i* and consonant *y*, although by about 1630 *j* (a differentiated *i*) had become established as the consonantal sound of English *y*. Herein we have the explanation for the difficulty experienced by transcribers of Old English documents in deciding whether certain letters should be rendered as *I*'s or *J*'s. The rule that if the letter goes well below the line it is a *J* is modern.

Majuscular *I* (or *J*) was, in Roman script, the simplest of all the letters, consisting solely of a perpendicular straight stroke on the line. Monkish cacography of the fourteenth century disguised it by the addition of the three elements with which the study of the black letter has made us familiar: the head-curve, the foot-curve, and the heavily shaded vertical rod (No. 1). In the current script which succeeded this, penmen retained something of the head-curve and the foot-curve and

produced such *I*'s (or *J*'s) as are shown in No. 2. Many penmen developed a habit of bisecting the vertical stroke with a short horizontal crossbar (No. 3), possibly intending thus to distinguish a *J* from an *I*. Very rarely one finds a *J* with a dot or a short horizontal stroke just above its head (No. 4). Some



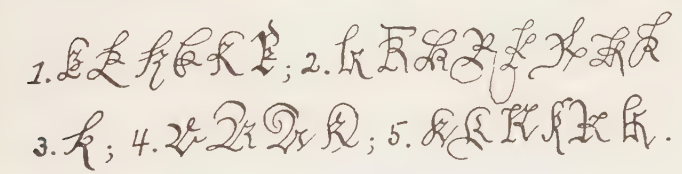
penmen omitted the head-curve, some the foot-curve (No. 5); others converted the foot-curve into a loop to the left of the stem, or, less often, to the right of the stem (No. 6); others added a vertical hair stroke to the right of the stem (No. 7). It was not at all unusual for penmen to substitute an arc (convex to the right) for the stem (No. 8).

Some unusual varieties of *I* and *J* are shown in No. 9.

It is evident that some of these *I*'s may easily be mistaken for *A*'s, *d*'s, *F*'s, *h*'s, *L*'s, and *s*'s.

K

K differs from *k* only in being larger and more ornamental (No. 1); the base line is more likely to be flourished and the

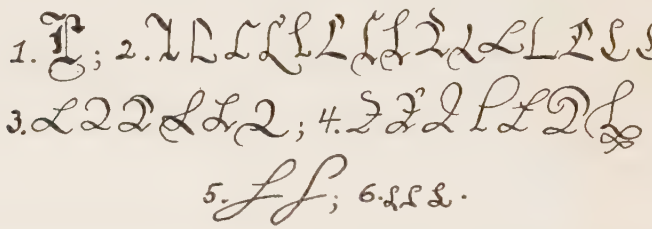


tail of the bow is more likely to be elongated downward or to have a curved hair stroke appended (No. 2). Very modern-

looking *K*'s occur now and then (No. 3). Occasionally one meets such fantastic *K*'s as those shown in No. 4. A few other varieties of *K* occasionally met with in England and on the Continent are shown in No. 5. That it is almost impossible to distinguish some of these *K*'s from *R*'s is evident at a glance.

L

In the Roman script an *L* was an *F* turned upside down but differing from it in lacking the crossbar. The monks of the fourteenth century, designing the black letter, made their *L* (No. 1) like their *F* (*q.v.*) and differentiated the two letters by



omitting the crossbar from the former. In cursive writing it became customary to elongate and emphasize the foot-curve by bringing it over far to the right of the stem, thus further differentiating it from the *F*. The frequent similarity between capital *F* and *L* may be the explanation for the common practice of writing *ff* and *ll* for these capitals. In certain words, as "Lloyd," a minuscular *l* followed a capital *L*.

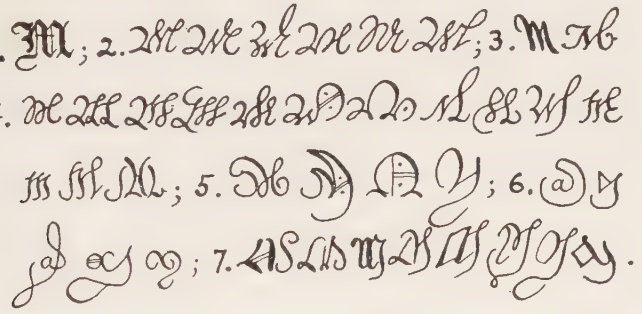
The earliest *L*'s, made as a two- or three-action letter, were those shown in No. 2. Subsequently, it seems, penmen grew more careless and emphasized the left side of the foot-curve, at the same time converting the stem into a simple or a compound curve or into a loop (No. 3). In the hands of many penmen the head-curve, either to the right or to the left side of the stem, became unduly prominent (No. 4). Rapid penmanship often ran the stem considerably below the line and ended the letter with a long narrow loop (No. 5). How absurdly things some-

times happen is shown by the fact that in the hands of some writers the script *L* acquired a crossbar (No. 4).

Some of these *L*'s may easily be mistaken for *h*'s, *s*'s, *t*'s, *J*'s, and *Q*'s.

M

Old English script *M* was usually only an ornate and large *m*. Roman *M*, from which this was ultimately derived, consisted of three heavy, perpendicular minims linked together by two light diagonals, the latter going from below up and to the right, the former from above down. Black-letter *M* (No. 1) differed from this *M* in having the customary head and foot flourishes, a crossbar through the second minim, and a superfluous (ornamental), light, perpendicular stroke just to the right of the second minim. In the Old English script one often finds survivals of this initial head-curve (No. 2) and foot-curve, but not of the crossbar. Very modern-looking *M*'s (No. 3) also occur throughout the period we are studying. But most of the *M*'s occurring in Old English manuscripts up to almost the end of the seventeenth century are fanciful distortions of the Roman *M*. These modifications were usually brought about by converting one or more of the straight strokes (minims and diagonals) into loops, by substituting ties or bows for angles at the junctions of diagonals with minims, and by elongating some minims and shortening others (No. 2). There was practically no limit to the way the minims might be modified (No. 4).



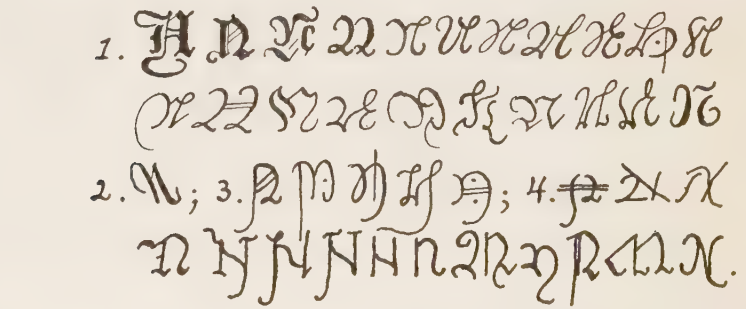
Some rather fantastic forms of *M* are shown in No. 5.

There was one extraordinary variety of *M* (No. 6) in use which calls for especial attention. It looked like a minuscular *a* followed by a sweeping right-handed curve which tended to envelop the *a*. It is depicted with all sorts of flourishes in some of the early Italian textbooks on handwriting. In English documents it seems to stand most frequently as an abbreviation for *Mr* (Master). The origin of this freakish letter seems to have been in the habit of some early penmen to close the first two minims of the *M*, thus seemingly converting that part of the letter into what looked like an *a* (No. 7). This effect was facilitated by the rather frequent practice of carrying the final minim far down and to the left.

Certain varieties of *M* may be mistaken for *H*, *a*, *G*, *ll*, *Vl*, *Vt*, *W*, *Y*, etc.

N

N, like *M*, is only an enlarged and superfluously adorned *n*. Because of its black-letter ancestry, it is often adorned with



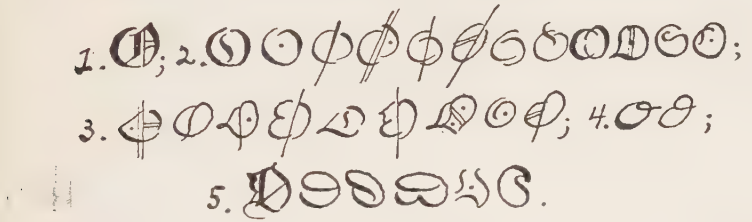
a preliminary head-curve, a foot-curve at the base of the first minim, and one or two vertical or horizontal hair strokes, with or without one or two dots (No. 1). *N*'s very much like those that we make today are not at all uncommon (No. 2). Very frequently one finds freak *N*'s in which the first minim has been greatly prolonged below the line; then there are others in which

the second minim has been prolonged below the line and swept around far to the left (No. 3). Other varieties of *N* occasionally met with are shown in No. 4.

Forms of *N* may easily be mistaken for *A*'s, *H*'s, *Rl*'s, *Sl*'s, *St*'s, *Y*'s, etc.

O

The *O* is often a very difficult letter to recognize, mainly because in the hands of many penmen it resembles the *C* or the *G* of other penmen. Being derived from the black-letter *O* (No. 1), rather than from the Roman, it was not closed at the top and often contained one or two vertical bisectors, one or

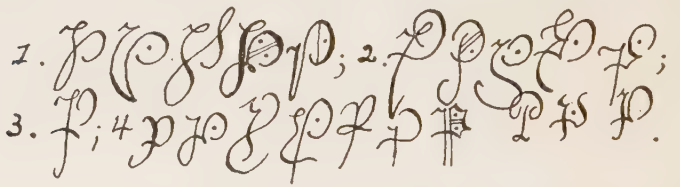


two dots, and one or two horizontal bars (No. 2). As our illustration shows, the letter itself was usually made by two actions of the pen, both curves being made from above downward. Not infrequently, however, it was made with one action of the pen; some penmen learned even to make the *O* and the vertical bisector without a pen-lift (No. 3). As usual, the left half of the letter sometimes consisted of a straight (instead of a curved) stroke, sometimes of the familiar obtuse angle, sometimes of a bow, and sometimes of a double curve (No. 3). Exceptionally we find an *O* with a fore-link (No. 4). The only certain way of differentiating an *O* from a *G* in current script is by the absence of a serif or a small arc near to or at the beginning of the left side of the former. A few odd varieties of *O* are depicted in No. 5.

O per se was used as the equivalent of the Arabic zero; as a numeral adjective it meant "one"; as a substantive it meant an orb, a spangle, a round spot; as an adverb it meant "aye."

P

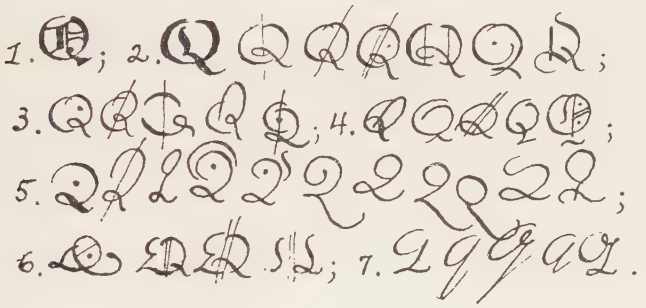
Notwithstanding its many twistings and turnings, the *P* of the court and secretary hands (No. 1) is only a Roman *P*, that is, a long vertical stem with a semicircle attached to its upper half on the right side, the convexity of the curve being to the right. As the illustration shows, the stem was often carried well below the line, often twisted around to the right and back again to the left and sometimes up; the semicircular head, distorted in various ways, was often linked to the returning upstroke of the stem, but most of the time it was made sepa-



rately, after a pen-lift (No. 2). One of the most curious features of this letter is that so many penmen chose to make the semicircle with two movements of the pen, though it was almost the simplest thing in the world to make it without a pen-lift (No. 3). This extraordinary phenomenon, we may conjecture, was due to the belief that the base of what should have been the semicircle was a crossbar. Some penmen actually added a crossbar. Dots, ties, vertical strokes, and short horizontal bars were, of course, not wanting. In this way a letter which could have been made with one pen-lift was made with two, three, or four pen-lifts, and even more. Some fantastic *P*'s are shown in No. 4. The right half of the letter was usually made from above downward, but not infrequently the process was reversed. Because of all these departures from the normal, the letter is often difficult to identify — a matter of considerable consequence when one considers that *p* begins more words in Modern English than any other letter except *s* and *c*.

Q

Only very exceptionally was a script *Q* an enlarged minuscule. As a general thing it was a more or less faithful reproduction of the black letter (No. 1), which may be best described as a capital *O* supplemented with a little curl intersecting the right side of the base of the letter. This *Q* was made with three movements of the pen: a "semicircle" on the left, another one on the right, and the tail-like curl. To this there were often, almost as a rule, added ornamental vertical and horizontal

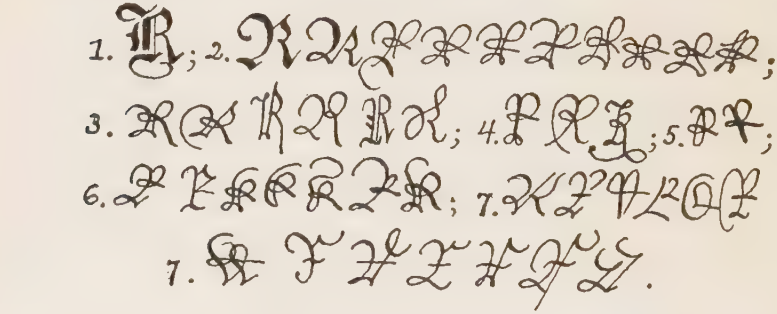


crossbars and dots, which necessitated one or more additional pen-lifts (No. 2). Inevitably some penmen learned to make the curl continuously with the right half of the letter, thus giving us the *Q*'s shown in No. 3; others learned to make the two semicircles with one continuous movement of the pen and to tack on the little curl after the circle or oval had been completed (No. 4). Penmen who were in the habit of substituting right-handed for left-handed curves made their *Q*'s very much as we make ours (No. 5). This undoubtedly was the origin of the modern *Q*, which resembles nothing so much as a large *2*. Those who were in the habit of distorting the arc on the left side of their letters produced such *Q*'s as are to be found even in some printed books of the seventeenth century (No. 6). A few not uncommon *Q*'s are shown in No. 7.

Some *Q*'s may be easily mistaken for *A*'s, *L*'s, and *R*'s.

R

Black-letter *R* (No. 1), and the Roman *R* from which it was derived, differed from a *P* (*q.v.*) in the possession of a vertical terminal tag or tail which depended from the lower end of what we called the semicircular head of the *P*. Before this tail, occurring also in *K*, became an established characteristic, the *R* (No. 2) was distinguished from a *P* by remaining on the line (in the *P* most penmen extended the main stem well below the line) and by being provided with a crossbar. The tailless *R*

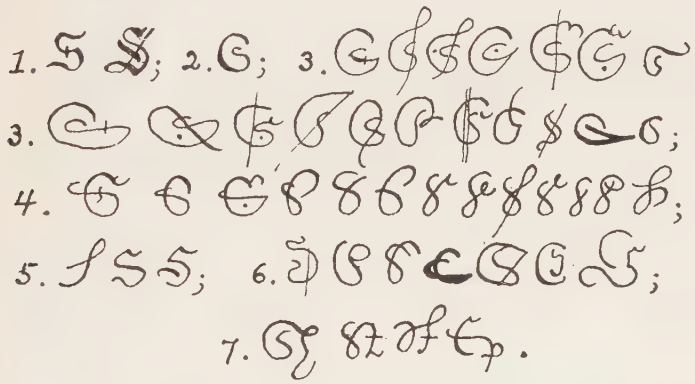


persisted for a long time. Sooner or later, however, some penmen added the tail by prolonging the crossbar downward (No. 3). In rapid writing it often happened that the descending stem and the returning upstroke overlapped (No. 4). As might be expected, this sort of writing often resulted in the omission of the little curve or tie at the base of the stem and in the conversion of the two vertical strokes into a loop (No. 5) — a very common variety of *R* in the Shaksperian period. The loop was often blind. With the addition of a tail this became our script *R*. Not infrequently some penmen omitted the returning upstroke; others converted the initial right-handed curve into a left-handed one, giving us such *R*'s as are depicted in No. 6. A few freak *R*'s are shown in No. 7. *R*'s were as generously supplied with rods and dots as the other capitals.

R's may be mistaken for *f*'s, *H*'s, *K*'s, *P*'s, and long *s*'s.

S

In the fifteenth century, and for a long time after, two distinct varieties of *S* were current in the black-letter font. One was evidently only a slightly fanciful Roman *S*, sometimes tricked out with an ornamental dot and a vertical bisector (No. 1); the other (No. 2), still current in Germany, was just as evidently an exaggerated and somewhat distorted Greek final sigma. The script *S* was usually a more or less successful attempt to reproduce the latter. Owing to the natural tend-



ency in hurried writing to convert semicircles into ovals and horizontal strokes into vertical ones, and to the custom of ornamenting capitals with bisectors, serifs, and dots, the written *S* assumed the forms shown in No. 3. Normally, as our illustration shows, the dorsal curve of the letter was somewhat to the left of the initial serif or "semicircle." But this was not always adhered to; many penmen made the ascending curve cut athwart the horizontal stroke in front of the initial serif (No. 4). Many of these *S*'s look like elongated *S*'s. Very modern-looking *S*'s (No. 5) occur occasionally, of course. Dots and vertical strokes are very frequent. Freakish *S*'s (No. 6) are by no means uncommon.

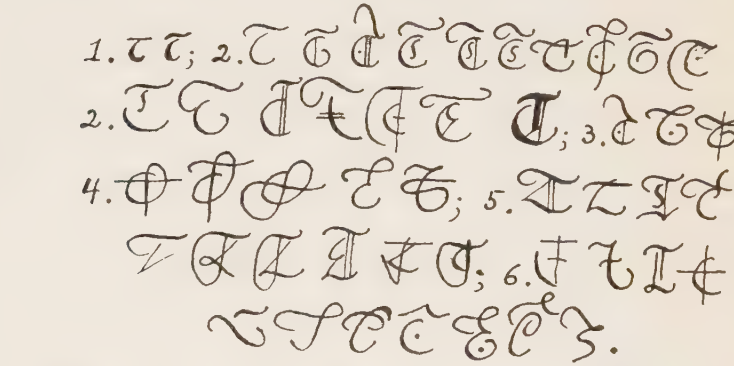
Though the *S* usually stood by itself, it not infrequently

linked with the succeeding letter by means of the overhead curve, and sometimes even by means of the initial curve (No. 7).

Some of the *S*'s shown above may be mistaken for *6*'s, *8*'s, *d*'s, *D*'s, signs of "and" (&), and *h*'s. Carelessly made *S*'s are very difficult to recognize, especially if their lower half is blind.

T

Script *T*, strange though it may seem, was at first only an enlarged *c* or *t*. The essential of a certain variety of *c*, we may recall, is an arc, convex to the left, crossed at or near its top by

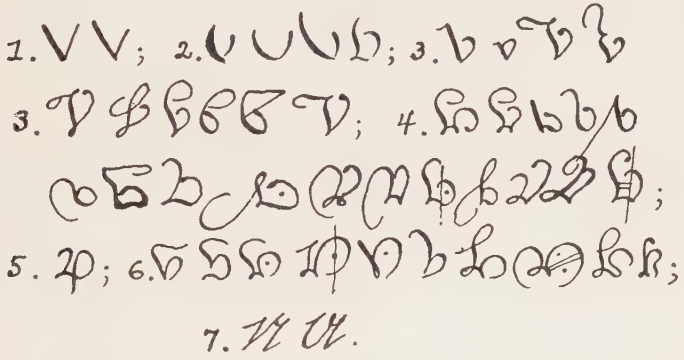


a straight or slightly wavy horizontal stroke (No. 1) with which the letter fore-links. A *T* is essentially the same thing (No. 2) but larger and very often decked out with one or two vertical strokes and a dot. Needless to say, the upper element is not always kept rigidly straight or strictly horizontal. Very often the upper stroke was made first (No. 3). Many penmen came to look upon the vertical bisector as an essential element of the *T* and made it right after the "semicircle" and without a pen-lift. Some even learned to make the whole letter with one continuous movement of the pen (No. 4), a typical variety of *T* which is found as early as the fifteenth century. Penmen who distorted the semicircle in the typical Renaissance manner produced such *T*'s as are shown in No. 5. A few freakish but not inexplicable *T*'s are shown in No. 6.

Some of these *T*'s may easily be mistaken for other letters; without the context some would not be identifiable at all. Thomas Heywood was in the habit of crossing his *T*'s, thus making them look exactly like *F*'s.

U, V

As late as the Elizabethan period the characters *U* and *V* meant the same sound in Latin, Norman French, and English. In fact, up to only a little more than a hundred years ago they



were, like *I* and *J*, counted as one letter in alphabetic arrangements. The name "vee" is a modern formation, the letter having been called "single *u*" as late as 1617. All through the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, and for several centuries before, capital *V* was used at the beginning of proper names and other words beginning with the sound of *U* or *V*; *U*, much less often employed, was only a graphic variation.

Stripped of all ornamentation, *U* (*V*) is only an enlarged minuscule. Being derived from the Greek upsilon, it consisted of two oblique vertical lines meeting at an angle on the base line, like the modern Roman *V*. At first the *V* was a double-stroke letter, the stroke on the left being made first, from above downward, and the stroke on the right, usually somewhat

shorter than the former, second, also from above downward (No. 1). The straight strokes, as usual, very soon gave place to curves (No. 2). It could not have been very long before the two strokes were made without a pen-lift and the letter was supplemented with an initial flourish and the straight strokes converted into curves (No. 3). The curve on the right always tended to turn towards the left at its top, very often touching the descending stem. The angle at the base became, in the hands of fluent penmen, a curve or a tie, sometimes a loop, and such *V*'s as are shown in No. 4 came into being. In some of these *V*'s the end of the letter, having approached the stem, turned around and down, passing through the base-curve and below the line (No. 5), thus producing a letter like a certain variety of *p*.

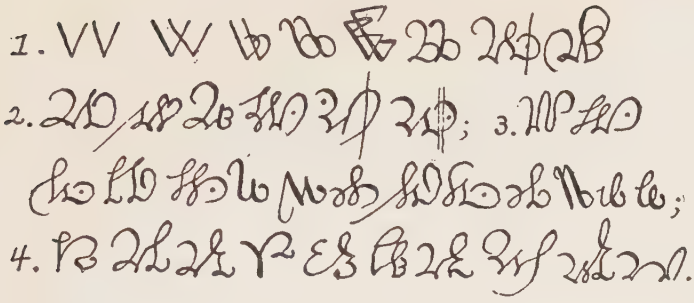
The substitution of a right-handed curve for the normal left-handed curve as the right half of the letter was almost inevitable (No. 6). We find some of these *V*'s as early as the first half of the fifteenth century.

That some of these *V*'s might, without the aid of the context, be easily mistaken for other letters, is evident.

In some countries, especially in Germany, such *U*'s as are shown in No. 7 were common, but they are also to be found in a few English documents of the sixteenth century.

W

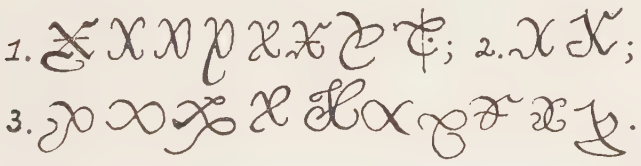
W, being, as its name implies, two *V*'s (*U*'s), was originally written and printed as two *V*'s standing alongside of each other. In script a notable tendency to ligature or interlock the *V*'s became apparent very early (No. 1), even though to do so the right half of the first *V* had to be left incomplete (No. 2). This naturally led to the reduction or degeneration of the first *V* to merely a minim (No. 3), which might be a simple or a flourished straight line or curve. In the hands of most penmen a *W* was only an enlarged minuscule. A few freakish varieties of the letter are shown in No. 4.



It would be vain to attempt to enumerate all the letters or combinations of letters for which a poorly made *W* might be mistaken.

X

X, being but rarely employed in the English language, underwent very few modifications at the hands of penmen. Superficially examined, there seem to have been two varieties

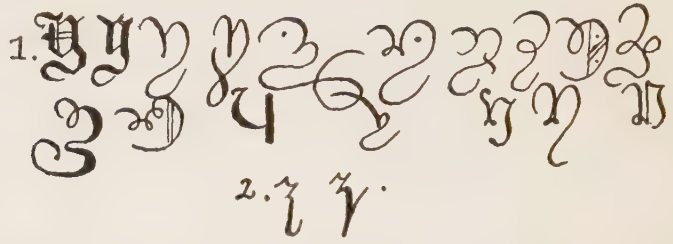


of *X* current, but, looked at carefully, they are found to be, like the minuscular letter, only different ways of making two diagonal strokes which cross each other (No. 1). Exceptionally some penmen made an *X* by addorsing two vertical arcs (No. 2). By way of ornamentation the letter was decked out with a vertical stroke, a dot, or a horizontal bar through the point of intersection of the two vertical strokes. A few fanciful *X*'s are shown in No. 3.

The letter *x* is often used by us as a symbol for an unknown or undetermined numeral adjective or name; but this use was unknown in the Renaissance period.

Y

Capital *Y* is normally only an enlarged minuscular *y*. Because of its size, however, it lends itself to ornamentation with flourishes, bows, rods, and dots (No. 1). Further comment on these would be superfluous.

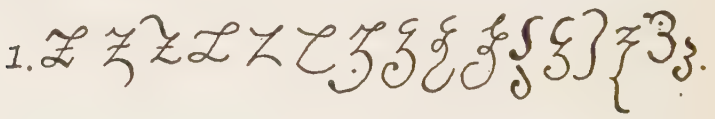


Because both *y* and *i* often have the identical sound, a capital *Y* was sometimes used for the personal pronoun *I*.

All through the period we are studying, the elongated script *z*-form of the Anglo-Saxon rune for guttural *g* (No. 2) was occasionally used as the equivalent of *Y*, as in *Yeven* for "Given." But much more frequently penmen writing legal documents preferred an unequivocal *Y* as a substitute for initial *G*.

Z

Regarding the *Z* all that needs to be said is that the capital is only an exaggerated minuscule (No. 1).



Chapter V

ABBREVIATIONS

In the medieval period it was an extraordinarily common practice for lawyers and other scholars writing documents in foreign languages, especially Latin, French, and Greek, to abbreviate a large percentage of their words. So common was this that unless the modern student has a fairly good knowledge of those languages he cannot possibly read any of those documents, even with the assistance of such books * as give long lists of abbreviated words and their meaning. The trouble with such lists is, however, that not all penmen used the same abbreviations, that the same abbreviation often stands for different words or letters, and that the lists are necessarily incomplete.

Inevitably penmen who were in the habit of abbreviating foreign words got to abbreviating the vernacular too. And so we find both writers and printers of English in the medieval period and in the Renaissance employing a large number of abbreviations.

The methods of abbreviation were these: Contraction, Elision, Absorption, Curtailment, Brevigraphs (or Special Signs), Superior Letters, and combinations of these.

Contraction

One of the commonest methods of abbreviating words was by the omission of one or more letters within a word. This is the method of Contraction, a kind of evisceration. No rules can be given regarding what letters or how many might or might not be omitted; if the context would enable the reader to infer or guess what word was meant, any number of letters

* For example, C. T. Martin's *The Record Interpreter* (1892), A. Wright's *Court Hand Restored* (*v.d.*), and C. Johnson and H. Jenkinson's *English Court Hands* (1915).

might be dispensed with. Such words as "Saint" (*Sct* or *St.*), "Master" (*Mr.*), "Mistress" (*Mrs.*), *Anno* (*Ao*), "Lordship" (*Lp*), "Majestie" (*Matie*), *domini* (*dni*), "letters" (*lres*), and *notre* (*nre*) are examples of the practice.

Contraction was indicated by some kind of flourish, most often probably by a shorter or longer horizontal stroke (a "tittle"), straight, curved, or looped, above all or part of the abbreviated word. What particular shape this stroke took depended on the caprice or taste of the scribe (No. 1). One of the oldest of these marks is the crescent, convex above, with a dot under it. A period or a colon after the contracted word, as in *Sr.* for "Sir," *Rs.* for *Regis*, and *Ricdus:* for *Ricardus*, did away with the horizontal stroke, although sometimes we find both the

period and the tittle. In a great many instances contraction was indicated by a thin vertical hair line (No. 2) through the terminal stroke of the final letter of the word (in those cases in which this terminal stroke is horizontal, as in *g*, *k*, *r*, and *t*). This straight stroke inevitably was converted into a curved stroke (which subsequently acquired a specialized meaning). In hurried penmanship it became customary to make the tittle and the terminal stroke of the last letter of a contracted word with one continuous movement of the pen (No. 3). Sooner or later penmen acquired the habit of omitting the tittle but retaining the terminal upward flourish (No. 3). This often made it impossible for a copyist or compositor to be sure what his author meant, especially as many writers (Shakspere among them) made these final upward flourishes where there was no contraction. If anything, this habit was even worse than making contractions and putting no warning sign above the word.

The letters most frequently omitted were *i*, *n*, *m*, and *r*. The omission of an *i* is especially common in the terminations *cion*, *sion*, and *tion*, as in *occac̃on* for "occasion," *suspic̃on* for

"suspicion," and *natõn* for "nation." In this connection we may mention the frequent use of *õ* for *ion*, as in *devotõ* for "devotion."

A horizontal stroke, rarely the acute accent (′), above a vowel denotes the omission of a succeeding *m* or *n*, as in *volũtary* for "voluntary." This is very frequent at the end of words, as in *mẽ* for "men." In the Shaksperian period this is the most common variety of abbreviation occurring in manuscripts and printed books. In earlier periods, especially in Latin documents, this contraction indicated not only the omission of a following nasal, but even of a preceding one, as in *eñ* for *enim*. (For a further discussion, see R. B. McKerrow's *Introduction to Bibliography*, page 320.)

An abbreviating stroke above an *m* or *n* within a word denotes the omission of a succeeding *m* or *n*, as in *dam̃acõn* for "damnation," *soñe* for "sonne." A word containing an *n* or an *m* was especially liable to contraction, as *dominus*, contracted to *dñs*.

The letter *l* with a transverse stroke through its upper half was used to indicate a variety of contractions, as in *Wıłm* for "William," *tołant* for "tolerant."

Contractions of this kind are also occasionally introduced by the letters *g*, *r*, and *t*, and sometimes by others, as in *pr̃is* for *patris*, *alīnate* for "alternate," *igr̃* for *igitur*, and *Edũs* for *Edwardus*.

Elision

A variety of abbreviation designated Elision calls for especial consideration. This is usually made for metrical and linguistic reasons and affects the pronunciation of the words concerned, but it occurs with surprising frequency even in non-dramatic printed books. The most frequent elision is the omission of the *e* in "the" before words beginning with a vowel or with aspirate *ha* or *he*, as in *thaction* (*thaccõn* or *thaccõ*) for "the action," *thandes* for "the handes," and *th'head* for "the head." In all these cases the elided letter, which may be in

any part of a word, may be represented by an apostrophe, but very often there is no such indication of abbreviation. The position of the apostrophe seems to have depended to some extent on the writer's or compositor's caprice, and we therefore find such things as *tho'nely* for "th' only" and *'oer* for "o'er."

Other such abbreviations occurring commonly in Elizabethan literature are *Y'are* ("You are," erroneously altered by modern editors to "you're"), *y'have* and *y'ave* ("you have," should not be changed to "you've"), *you've*, *th'have* and *they've*, *they'll*, *we'll* or *wee'le* or *wele* (for "we will"), *we'ld* (for "we would"), *they'd* and *the 'id* (for "they would"), *th'are* (for "they are"), *thou'rt* (for "thou art"), etc. Among the most common types of elision must be mentioned the omission of the *k* in "taken" (written *tane* or *ta'en*), of the *v* in "over," "ever," "heaven," "seven," and "even" (written *o'er*, *ore*, and *'ore; e'er* or *ere; hane; sev'n* or *sen; e'en*, *een*, or *ene*), of a vowel within a word (as in *mast'ry*), of final *f* in the preposition "of" (as in *o' th' house* for "of the house"), of final *n* in the prepositions "in" and "on" (as in *i' th'* for "in the"), of initial *u* in "us" (as in *let's* for "let us," *see's* for "see us," *with's* for "with us" and "with his"), and of initial *i* in "is" and "it" (as in *that's* for "that is," *'tis* or *it's* for "it is"). Among the rare abbreviations of this type are the omission of mesial *d* in such words as "needle" and "meddle" (written *neele*, *neeld*, and *mel*) and of mesial *th* in "other," "father," "mother," "brother," "whether" (often written *where*). In the same class, too, belong such abbreviations as *horse* for "horses" and "horse's," *conscience* for "conscience's," and *this* for "this is." Other noteworthy abbreviations are *thow'st* for "thou beest," *thou't* for "thou wilt," *th'erl* for "there will," *not'* for "no, it," *gi'm* for "give him," *sh'av* for "she have," *t'as* for "it has," *has* for "he has," *id'e* for "I would," and *by's* for "by his," or "by us." It should also be noted that *you're* stood for "you were" as well as for "you are."

The abbreviation of words for euphonic or metrical reasons by the omission of initial syllables and short vowels (that is,

Apheresis and Aphesis) has, like most of the above elisions, survived to the present day. This is true also of abbreviation by the method of Syncopation. It is only necessary to warn the student that not all words that look like abbreviations are so; for example, *fore* is not an abbreviation of "afore" or "before," *yon* is not an abbreviation of "yonder," *scape* is not an abbreviation of "escape," and so forth.

The omission of the *o* in "to" occurs not only before vowels, as in *t'atone* for "to atone," but also, in some writers (Ben Jonson, for example), even before consonants, as in *t'talke* and *t'himselfe*.

The *v* in "have" was often omitted, giving us *ha'*; because of this we sometimes find *hate* or *ha't* and even *haate* (for "have it"), rhyming with such words as "Kate." Jonson even wrote *hahem* (pronounced *hame*) for "have them."

Such Apocopes as *gent'man* for "gentleman," *gentness* for "gentleness," and *mess'ger* for "messenger" occur in a number of dramatic writers, especially Ben Jonson, and even in printed books of the period.

In this section we must also refer to such abbreviations as *Slid* or *S'lid*, *S'light*, *'Sprecious*, and *S'foot*, for such oaths as "God's [eye]lid," "God's light," "God's precious [blood]," and "God's foot." Our "zounds" means "God's wounds."

Such syllables as *em*, *be*, and *pro* at the beginning of words were sometimes omitted if the verse required it. We sometimes find *have* for "behave," *'mploiement* for "employment," etc.

Elisions assume importance for the delver into textual anomalies and for editors because of the possibility of the occurrence of certain errors; for example, *y'are* (*yare*) may be mistaken for "yare," *t'ask* may be written (and mistaken for) "task," *t'ease* may be written (and mistaken for) "tease," "they're" may be written *their*, *to't again* may — as in *Othello*, III, i, 19 — be mistaken for "toot again."

A variety of abbreviation which is met with often enough to require notice has been designated Absorption. It consists of the loss of a consonant, usually *s* or *t*, or a short word, as

"it," after a word ending with a sound like that of the lost letter or word. Thus, for example, *but* (with or without an apostrophe) stands for "but it," "but to," "but the" (*The Tempest*, I, ii, 245); *at* stands for "at the" (*The Tempest*, II, ii, 68); *with* stands for "with the." Sometimes *this* was written for "this is," as in *Sir Thomas Moore* (II, iv, 110, Brooke's edition). Now and then we find even such absorptions as *should* for "she should" (*The Tempest*, II, i, 134). In *The Winter's Tale* we find eight instances of this phenomenon. Usually, not invariably, metrical considerations were responsible for these abbreviations.

Curtailment

Curtailment, less happily designated Suspension, is the omission of the last letter or letters of a word, as in *yond'* (yonder), *cor'* (*coram*), *R* (*Rex*), *warr'* (warrant), for graphiological reasons. If the abbreviation serves a metrical or euphonic purpose, as in *yond' rascal* (to avoid the cacophony of "yonder rascal") and *th'elements* (for "the elements," to eliminate a syllable), the process is known as Apocope.

As in the case of contractions, these abbreviations were indicated, as a rule, by a more or less horizontal, straight or curved stroke above the terminal part of the word (No. 1, p. 120), or by a straight or curved descending vertical line through the terminal portion of the last written letter (No. 2), or, usually after proper names, by a dot or colon to the right of the shortened word. Another rather common way of indicating curtailment was to turn the final stroke up and back to the left (No. 3). But it must not be forgotten that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was a common practice to decorate certain tall letters, notably *b*'s, *h*'s, and *l*'s, with these strokes, even though the words in which they occurred were not abbreviated. Towards the end of the fifteenth century some penmen indicated abbreviation by a character which can be best described as a modern script *ℑ* after the abbreviated word.

Regarding the vertical sign of curtailment it must be

remarked that in some instances, especially if the letters to be omitted followed a *d*, *f*, *g*, or *k*, the sign of abbreviation was reduced to a mere tick or turning down of the final stroke of the preceding letter (No. 4). This happens less frequently after *n*'s, *f*'s, long *s*'s, and *t*'s. The matter is confusing at times because such ticks and short flourishes are often only the manifestations of a penman's artistic impulse.

The habit of omitting the tittle or the compound curve (an elongated tilde) and indicating the abbreviation by imparting an upward curve to the final stroke (No. 3) was losing favor towards the end of the sixteenth century, undoubtedly because printers were finding the practice objectionable. A compositor must often, for example, have been in doubt whether a little flourish on a final *t* meant the omission of a succeeding *er*. The most famous of Shaksperian cruxes — Hamlet's "dram of eale" which "doth all the noble substance of a doubt" — was in all likelihood due to the compositor's inability to read correctly the scribe's "dram of eule" (evil) which "doth all the noble substance oft adoulter."

Brevigraphs

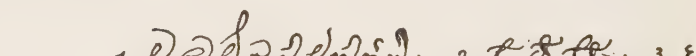
For economic reasons, in all probability, scriveners had developed the habit of contracting certain frequently recurring syllables, especially such as occur at the beginning and at the end of words. In the middle of a word the phenomenon is not quite so frequent. These contracted syllables occur so often, even in printed books, that a thorough knowledge of them is indispensable. It will be convenient to call these syllables, consisting of a letter whose normal form has been modified so as to make it stand for something else, Brevigraphs (from *brevis* and *grapho*). They are not shorthand symbols.

Brevigraphs may be most conveniently grouped and considered as follows:

ber, *cer*, *der*, *fer*, *ger*, etc. — In words in which the syllables *ber*, *cer*, *der*, etc., occurred (as "certify," "fertile," "funeral,"

"determine," "number," "ulcer," "under," "dangerous," "theater") the letters *er* were often omitted, the omission being indicated by a flourished stroke which went up from the letter preceding the *er*, turned around to the left, and terminated in a short vertical descender above the *b*, *c*, *d*, etc., or a little to the left of it (No. 1). The flourish was, of course, modified in various ways in ordinary penmanship. In many instances the flourish was not continuous with the terminal stroke of the letter to which it belonged (see the penultimate letter in No. 1), being inserted above this letter after the rest of the word had been written, as in *vnd'go*, *eu'y*.

But it must not be supposed that this flourish was restricted to the letters *er;* it served just as well, though not so often, as a substitute for *-ar* (in "scimitar"), *-or* (in "pastor"), *-re* (in "sceptre"), *-ure* (in "adventure," "venturesome"), *-ur* (in "return"), and *-yr* (in "martyr").



It is important to bear in mind that these *er*-flourishes were often written so small that they may be (and undoubtedly often were) mistaken for meaningless or merely ornamental curls. Doubts may therefore arise occasionally whether a given word is "numb" or "number," "a doubt" or "adoulter" (the *l* being mistaken for a *b*), etc. And, on the other hand, mere terminal curls or flourishes may now and then be mistaken for *er*-flourishes.

The flourish illustrated in No. 1 (above) was frequently employed at the end of a word as a general sign of abbreviation (contraction, curtailment), not merely for *er*.

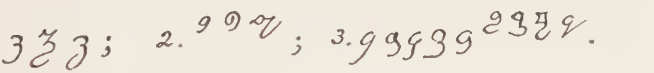
In the case of the tall letters, *b*, *d*, *f*, and *l*, preceding the letters *er*, it was customary to replace the flourish with a tittle or a tilde through the loop of the letter (No. 2).

Re (pronounced *re*, not *er*) at the beginning and in the middle of words, as in "remember," "requier," was sometimes (as in a

letter by Mary, Queen of Scots) written with a flourished *r* (No. 3).

us. — Final *us* following a consonant, both in written and in printed matter, especially in the Latin tongue, was very often represented by a character resembling the right half of a *B* (perhaps from the syllable *bus*), or an elongated *ȝ*, or a certain variety of *z* (No. 1), extending below the line and hugging the letter preceding it. (Sometimes it was represented by a character resembling a modern *ꝯ* on or above the line.) The occurrence of this final or mesial *us*-brevigraph in the vernacular is not very frequent. In early German books and manuscripts it stands also for *as* and *ass*.

This mark did not always stand for *us;* a *q* having this graph after it stood for the enclitic *que* as well as for the words *quod*, *quia*, and even *quam*. In the words *licet* or *liquet* and *atque* the graph (without the *q*) stood for the letters *et*, *quet*, and *que;* in a few other Latin words, such as *posset* and *scilicet*, this



character stood for the letters *osset* and *cilicet*. Our *viz.* (= *videlicet*) is a remnant of this usage. In *sed* the graph stands for the letters *ed*.

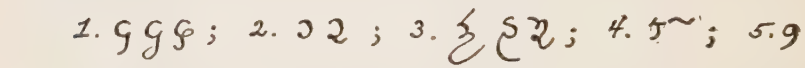
Final *m* and final *es* were also sometimes represented by this graph. The context usually leaves no doubt which abbreviation is meant.

Mesial and final *us* were often symbolized by a graph resembling a *q* written above the line and just to the right of the letter preceding it (No. 2). Being written continuously with the terminal stroke of the preceding letter, it was written from below upward and (often) provided with a little curl above (No. 2). It probably occurs most often after a *b*, an *m*, and a *t*.

This *us*-graph was not infrequently written from the line downward, then resembling an infralinear *ꝯ*, a *g*, a *q*, or even a *y* (No. 3). It has occasionally been mistaken for a *ꝯ*.

The mark was not restricted to the letters *us;* in some words it stands for *es* (as in *kynges*), *os* (as in *post*, *postea*), and *us* (as in *Canutus*). With a preceding *h* the combination stood for *huius*. Final *s* and *es* were often represented by the flourish shown and discussed under the letter *s*. In German documents this flourish often stood for final *um*, *er*, and *en*. An *f* followed by this flourish stood for "florin."

com, *cog*, *con*, *coun*, *cum*. — The initial syllables *com* (as in "commit"), *con* (as in "consider"), *cog* (as in "cognizant"), *coun* (as in "country"), etc., were very often indicated



by a minuscular *c* with a tail-like flourish (sweeping to the left, below the line) from the lower tip of the *c* (No. 1). In many early documents an inverted *c* stood for *con* (No. 2). Sometimes it was made as shown in No. 3, and now and then it was converted into a *c* followed by a tilde just above and to the right of the *c* (No. 4). Some penmen replaced it by a *q*-like *us*-symbol (No. 5). The word *contra* was often reduced to *ɔa*.

par, *per*, *pir*, *por*, *pur*. — Perhaps the most common brevigraph, certainly in the Elizabethan period, is a *p* modified by a horizontal curved stroke through the descender, standing

for the letters *par* (as in "depart," "parish"), *per* (as in "perform," "perish"), *pir* (as in "spiritual"), *por* (as in "portray"), and *pur* (as in "purpose"). The mark, below the line, goes from left to right and is convex upward (No. 1), usually being made continuously with the descender — that is, without a pen-lift. In printed matter this stroke was represented by a tittle through the stem just below the line.

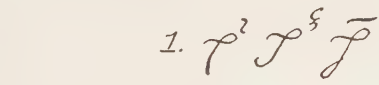
Instead of this *per*-symbol we sometimes, not at all infrequently, find a *p* followed by the upward and backward curl which we described as the sign of Contraction (No. 2).

For *pur* some persons made a *p* with a sort of *2* (an *r*) directly above it (No. 3).

pro. — The syllable *pro*, both at the beginning and in the middle of words, was written like the *per*-symbol, differing from it only in that the horizontal curve had its convexity

downward (No. 1). It occurs in such words as "produce" and "improve." In such words as "proper" we sometimes find, even in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, the conjoined *p*'s shown in No. 2.

pre. — *Pre* and *prae* were often represented by a *p* followed by or linked to a small *r* above and to the right of the head of the *p* (No. 1). Sometimes, especially in print, the *r* is replaced



by a tittle just above the head of the *p*. Exceptionally one finds a *per*-symbol used for *pre*. *Pri* was, not very often, written p^{r}, rarely p^{i} (as in $p^{i}ce$ for "price").

q-contractions. — There is a great variety of these, but fortunately they occur chiefly in Latin documents. A *q* with a

dot or an *i* above it, or with a tittle through the descender (No. 1), usually stands for the syllable *qui*, initially, mesially, and finally.

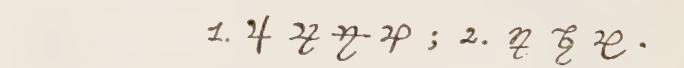
A *q*, minuscular or majuscular, with a tilde or a tittle above it (No. 2), stands for Latin *quae* or English *que*.

The syllable *quam* was written in any of the ways shown in No. 3. *Qua-* was often written q^a with a tilde through the *a*.

Latin *quod* (because) and English "quod" (quoth) were written with a *q* having an oblique vertical stroke through the descender (No. 4). "Quod" was also written q^d.

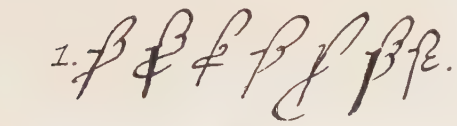
In the Latin *atque* (*vide supra*) the *ȝ*-like *que*-symbol was sometimes replaced by a semicolon hugging the descender of the *q*. In French documents a *q* with a short perpendicular stroke above it (No. 5) stands for *que;* hence *qu'el* was often written *q'l*.

rum. — This syllable is represented, both in script and in print, mesially and finally, by the "round" *r* (an *r* like a *2*) with a curved or straight vertical stroke through its terminal

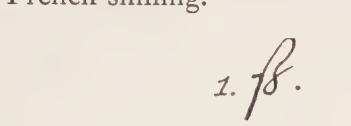


horizontal limb (No. 1). The graph is sometimes altered to what is shown in No. 2. Other syllables represented by it, in the hands of some penmen, are *ram*, *ras*, *res*, and *ris*. In addition to this the *r*-graph sometimes stands for one or more syllables beginning with the letter *r*, as in such words as *coronacionem*. Towards the end of the fifteenth century some penmen represented final *um* by the *as*-flourish. In German documents of the Renaissance period final *um* was very frequently represented by the *es*-flourish; in many instances this looked very like an *x*.

ser, sir. — The letters *ser*, sometimes *cer* and *cir*, in any part of a word (as in "miserie," "certify," "servant," "answer," "circle," "deserve"), and even when standing alone (as for the words "sir," *sieur*), were represented by a secretary long *s* with a diagonal stroke through the lower part of the descender (No. 1). Carelessly written, it sometimes looks like an *s* with a *ȝ* attached to its stem.

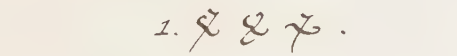


In Latin documents this graph stands also for *sus*, *sis*, and *serim*, and sometimes even for final *us*. In French documents it often stands for *solz* — that is, the *sol* (or *sous*) *tournois*, the best known French shilling.



sis, *ses*, and *sus*. — In Latin words chiefly, such as *mensis*, the syllable *sis* was written with a secretary long *s* having a sort of figure-of-eight dangling from the tip of the supralinear bow (No. 1). This graph occasionally did duty for *se*, *so*, and even for *sum*. Two examples of it occur on page 3 of Shakspere's will. The manuscript of *Edmund Ironside* presents several instances of the use of double long *s* for *ses*, writing *possion* for *posesion* (possession).

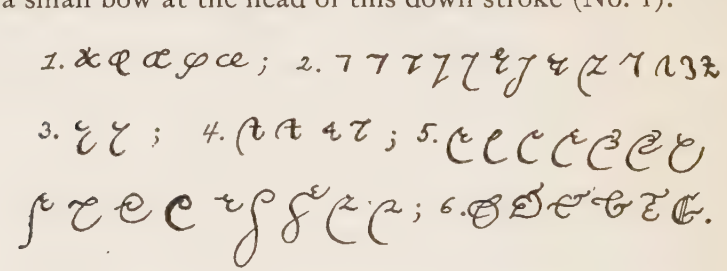
Some abbreviations which hardly deserve the name of brevigraphs should be mentioned here. In Latin documents we often find an *l* with a horizontal stroke through the loop as a sign of abbreviation (No. 1), as in *atr* for *aliter*. The Latin *hec* (*haec*) was often represented by an *h* with a diagonal stroke through the stem (No. 2); *hoc*, on the other hand, was represented by an *h* with a dot over the right half of the letter (No. 3).



A rather infrequent abbreviation consists of a *v* with a diagonal stroke through it (No. 1) for the letters *ver*.

In French documents of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and later we find a flourish for *ur* (No. 1) in such words as *pour*, *procureur;* it resembles a *3* or a *z* and is above the line.

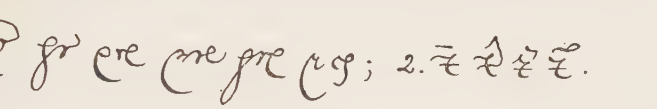
The conjunctions "and" and *et*, when not written in full, were represented by either one of two symbols, one being the modern ampersand (&, &) and the other the so-called Tironian sign (from Cicero's learned friend and amanuensis M. Tullius Tiro, who is said to have invented some five hundred abbreviations for certain letters and words). The ampersand or ampassy (both words being corruptions of "and *per se* — and") originally consisted of a headless *a* (a "one-story" *a*) whose second down stroke (the left side of the semioval) was prolonged down below the line and turned into an *e* by the addition of a small bow at the head of this down stroke (No. 1).



In eleventh century manuscripts the Tironian sign looked like our printed Arabic *7* (No. 2), the descender or stem going only slightly (if at all) below the line. As in the case of the other letters and characters, current penmanship modified the ideal pattern in various ways, as by the addition of a straight or curved introductory or terminal upstroke, or both, by the conversion of the terminal stroke into an infralinear left-handed or right-handed curve, or by the addition of a loop below the line (No. 2). Some penmen substituted a little curl (No. 3) for the horizontal element; others transmogrified the symbol into a sort of small *t* (No. 4) on the line and with a

short horizontal bisector. Later on, about the middle of the fourteenth century, the head-curl or bow was shifted to the right of the curved stem (No. 5). And, of course, both the head and the tail were modified in various ways, in accordance with the taste of individual penmen. The Tironian sign, made as shown in No. 5, was undoubtedly often mistaken for minuscular *a* (with a curved initial upstroke), and *vice versa*. A few other signs for "and" and *et* are shown in No. 6.

The special sign for *etc.* (*et caetera*) was very frequently employed. It consisted of the Tironian sign for *et* followed by a small secretary *c* ending with a little upward curl (No. 1). Many sixteenth century and seventeenth century penmen



omitted the upward curl (the sign of abbreviation) and replaced it by the brevigraph for *is* (the sign of the ablative plural).

Some writers did not hesitate to make the *and*-symbol serve for *and* (or *et* in Latin documents) even within a word, writing, for example, *h&some* for "handsome." The Latin word *etiam* was often represented by the sign for *et* with a horizontal stroke through it and a similar stroke or a tittle above it (No. 2). Some wrote *and* (&) for *an*, "if."

In the medieval period it was fairly common to represent the Latin word *est* by a short horizontal line with a dot above and below it (No. 1). After this period its use became rare,

surviving in a few hands as an archaism. In the hands of different penmen the horizontal stroke became curved, the dots became virgules, and the three constituents of the symbol were made by one or two actions of the pen (No. 2). Some of these may be mistaken for one or other letter of the alphabet, as for

i, *p*, or *s*. This mark was frequently used in the margins of accounts as a sort of check mark, perhaps as the equivalent of our "O. K." or √. It is not an *s*, although it has often been mistaken for it. Some penmen converted the *est*-symbol into a figure resembling a *z* (No. 3); this mark, in turn, developed into the form shown in No. 4.

Superior Letters

For several centuries English calligraphers had indulged in the habit of indicating the omission of one or more letters within a word by writing the last letter or letters of the word slightly above the line, thus: *Ma*^{tie} (Majestie), *w*^{ch} (which), *w*^{t} or *w*th (with), *Jn*^{o} (John), etc. Any word might be treated in this way, and only the whim of the writer determined what letters he would omit and how many of the concluding letters he would elevate above the line. The use of superior letters did not necessarily eliminate the introduction of the customary abbreviating flourishes. These flourishes — a backward curl, a tittle, a tilde, etc. — were often attached to the superior letters; not at all infrequently the abbreviating horizontal stroke bisected the superior letters. It is interesting to note that the superior letters might themselves be abbreviated (thus sometimes giving us three-story words) and might include the special signs we have termed brevigraphs. Many penmen put a period or a colon below the superior letter or letters, usually just to the right of the letter preceding the abbreviation.

Superior letters did not always mean abbreviation. Some writers, Shakspere among them, indulged in the trick of ornamenting the products of their pens by writing certain words — their names, for example — in full but raising one or two letters above the line and even adding an unnecessary flourish.

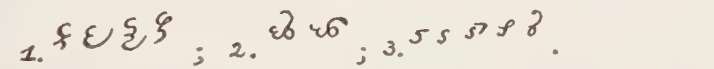
In the matter of superior letters the most interesting fact perhaps is the frequency with which the letter *r*, within or at the end of a word — as in *o*^{r} for "our," *sen*^{r} for "senior," *m*^{r}*ket* for "market," *W*^{r}*cester* for "Worcester" — is raised above the line, even where there is no abbreviation. When this

happens the letter is usually only a kind of modified *z*, instead of the formal *r* (No. 1). This suspended *r*, when it is a mark of abbreviation, stands for either *ar*, *er*, *ir*, *or*, or *ur*.

In English documents of the period we are considering, by far the most frequent instances of the use of superior letters are in the words "you" and "your," "which," "whichever," "with" (and compounds of "with," as "without") "that," "the," "they," "our" (and compounds of "our"), "ever" (and its compounds), and words beginning with the syllable *pre*.

"You" was often written with the *u* (or *w*) above the line; sometimes the *o* is above the line and the *u* above and to the right of the *o*. "Your" is most frequently written yo^{r}, but sometimes the scribe wrote the *o* above the line and the *r* above and to the right of the *o*. It is often difficult to distinguish "you" from "your."

"The" was very often written y^{e}, and is easily mistaken for y^{r} (their). "This" was sometimes written y^{s}. A few writers —



the scribe of the *Parnassus* trilogy, for example — wrote y^{e} for "they"; some penmen wrote y^{r}, y^{er}, for "their," and Shakspere seems to have written y^{u} for "thou" (see *The Tempest*). *Yy* for "they" also occurs.

"Which" was usually written w^{ch}, exceptionally w^{c} and $w^{c}h$. "With" was almost as a rule written w^{th}, sometimes $w^{t}h$, and not infrequently merely as w^{t}. W^{t} not infrequently stands for "what."

"That" became, in the hands of many fluent penmen, y^{t}; this may occasionally be mistaken for *yt* (it).

In connection with superior *r* it must be borne in mind that many penmen, especially writers of legal documents, often wrote final *rs* (as in "executors") above the line (No. 2).

Final *s* (No. 3) was very often written as a superior letter at the end of a word, especially if the word was abbreviated, as in a^{s} for *alias*, $o'e^{s}$ (or $\tilde{o}e^{s}$) for *omnes*.

Final *ment*, as in "government," *promptement*, was often written m^t. In French documents superior *me* stands for *ieme*, as in *huict*^{me} (eighth).

The abbreviations for "pounds," "shillings," and "pence" were as a rule written as superior letters. For "pounds" (*librae*), whether of money or of weight, the scribe wrote an *l*, *lb*, or *li*, with or without a horizontal stroke through the *l*, just above and to the right of the number; for "shillings" (*solidi*) he wrote a so-called "final" *s* or *sh*, or a Greek sigma, and for "pence" (*denarii*) he wrote a *d*. Superior *d* stood also for *doict*. The modern £ came into being near the end of the sixteenth century, about the same time when scribes began to write *Jn*^{o} for "John." A small *s* after a number does not always stand for "shillings." Some persons — for example, Thomas Randolph (in *The Drinking Academy*) — wrote *1000s* for the word "thousands."

When writing ordinal numerals — as *tertio*, *decimo*, and "tenth" — penmen almost invariably wrote the final *o*, *mo*, *th*, *te*, etc., in the superior position, thus: x^{mo} for *decimo*, *iij*^{o} for *tertio*.

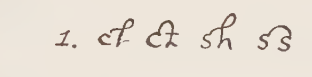
To indicate scores (that is, so many twenties), hundreds, and thousands, it was customary to put *xx* (score), *C* (hundred), and *M* or *Ml* (thousand) directly above (rarely above and to the right of) the numeral, thus: $\overset{xx}{iij}$ (3 × 20, threescore), $\overset{C}{iiij}$ (4 × 100), $\overset{M}{v}$ (5 × 1,000). Some scribes even wrote *ty* in a superior position when writing such a number as "forty," thus: xl^{ty}. Now and then one finds a document in which a cardinal number is written in three stories, as in $\overset{l}{\underset{M}{iiij}}$ for "four thousand," the *l* of the word *mille* being put above or above and to the right of the *M*.

Ligatures

From time immemorial, as we say, penmen have been in the habit of linking certain letters together by means of an unneces-

sary extra stroke. Such combinations have been designated Ligatures. These ligatures are almost invariably the Roman letters *ct*, *ch*, *sp*, *ss*, *st*, *sh*, and a certain very popular form of *Et*. Some penmen seemed to have a fondness for the trick of so linking adjoining letters, and there was no rule to prohibit them from ligating any letters they pleased.

Most often the ligating stroke was a compound curve or a simple right-handed curve extending from the top of the first letter to the top of the second one. Ligatures are of importance



only because in the hands of careless penmen the combinations may be mistaken for other letters: *st* may be mistaken for *N*, *ct* for *a*, etc.

Conjoined Letters

Conjoined letters (Fr. *liaisons*) are most often letters of the Gothic secretary script and are much more likely to give rise to errors in reading and transcription than ligatures. They are also much more common in the writings of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries; in fact, one hardly finds a specimen of fluent penmanship in which they do not occur. They may perhaps best be compared to what printers call "duotypes" and be defined as two letters which have been written in such a manner that the terminal stroke of the former is the initial stroke of the latter. In this way two adjoining letters contain between them one stroke which properly belongs to both. The letters most frequently conjoined in this way are the following: *ae* (*æ*), *oc*, *dd*, *ff*, *oe*, *oo*, *pp*, *rr*, *sb*, *sf*, *sh*, *sk*, *sl*, *sp*, *ss*, *st*, *sv*, and *sw*. Conjoined letters offer the greatest difficulties to the novice in reading old manuscripts. The practice of conjoining letters began in the thirteenth century and was at first restricted to the letters *e* and *o* when these followed the letters *d*, *p*, *c*, *b*, *v*, and *w*.

In *cc*, *rr*, and *tt* one crossbar answers for both letters. In *ae*, *oe*, and *oo* the intermediate connecting strokes are omitted and the letters become twinned. In *pp* one head serves for both letters. When a secretary long *s* unites with an *f* or another secretary long *s* it omits the final descender (on the right side, above the line), passing on to the succeeding letter by a compound horizontal curve above or by turning down in a straight or curved stroke which is to constitute the stem of the adjoining letter.

Conjoined capitals (monograms) occur as ornamental devices in all ages, witnessing to a sort of calligraphic facetiousness in the penman. Note, for example, how Sir Alfred Tennyson conjoined his *A* and his *T* into a sort of monogram; Dr. John Hall, Shakspere's son-in-law, did the same thing with his *Jo* and *H;* Jean J. Rousseau made the descender of the second *J* the stem of the succeeding *R;* Shakspere made a monogram of the *spere* in one of his signatures; and Henry Cheeke, the author of *Freewill*, converted the vertical stroke constituting the right half of the *H* into a *C*.

Chapter VI

PUNCTUATION AND OTHER MARKS

In the matter of punctuation marks, often designated "points," writers and printers of the Renaissance period were, if possible, even more lawless and haphazard than as regards spelling and capitalization. Many penmen, even those employed to write important legal and official documents, made use of no punctuation marks whatsoever. Thus, for example, in the Huntington Library's manuscript copy of Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chesse*, some of which may be in the poet's own handwriting, many speeches contain not a single punctuation mark, not even a period at the end of a sentence. And this manuscript was probably written at the very end of the first quarter of the seventeenth century! To us, who sometimes attach great importance to the presence or absence of a comma, such a thing would — but for the evidence of our eyes — be almost unthinkable. In the manuscript play of *Edmund Ironside*, transcribed by a professional scrivener (probably in the last decade of the sixteenth century), a question mark occurs only seven times, exclamation marks occur not at all, commas very rarely, and colons perform the duty of commas, periods, query marks, exclamations, etc. This is the more remarkable when one considers that in the manuscript of *Misogonus*, written in 1577 (by two University men!) almost every modern punctuation mark is employed and with great liberality.

The absence and, what is often worse, the careless use of punctuation marks in old manuscripts often give rise to ambiguities and errors which it is the task of modern scholars to rectify. In dramatic manuscripts of the Shaksperian period the name of the speaker of a line or speech may become part of

the text; stage directions may creep into the text; a part of a speech may become a stage direction; two speeches may become fused into one; and so forth.

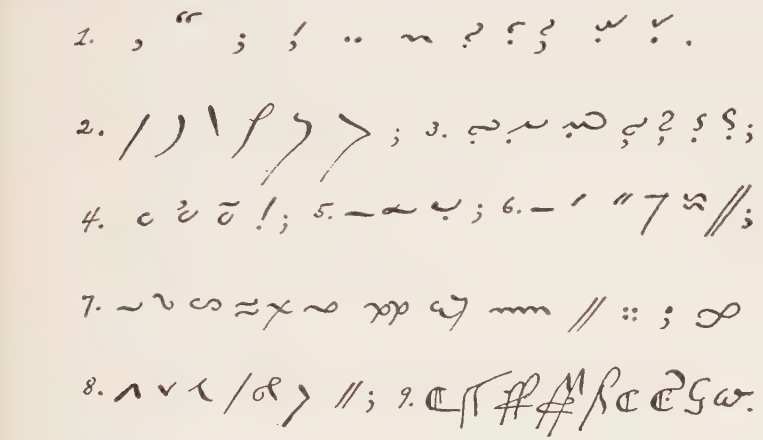
The punctuation marks at the disposal of writers in the last quarter of the sixteenth century were the virgule (/), the comma (,), the inverted comma (‘), the colon (:), the semicolon (;), the inverted semicolon (⁝), the period (.), the double period (..), the query mark (?), the exclamation (!), the horizontal dash (—), the parenthesis (( ), [ ]), the paragraph marks (¶, ¶), and quotation marks (“). But the use of these marks, especially of the comma, the semicolon, the colon, and the virgule, was very erratic even in the first quarter of the seventeenth century.* How very erratic in the use of punctuation marks writers were during the centuries preceding the time just mentioned will appear from our comments on the individual “points.”

Commas, modified virgules, introduced into England during the first quarter of the sixteenth century, were used mainly to mark short pauses in the sense; but in many Elizabethan manuscripts, as in *The Second Maydens Tragedy*, the comma takes the place of any punctuation mark (a period, an exclamation mark, an interrogation point) the writer may happen to think he needs. Thomas Heywood, and undoubtedly other dramatists too, employed it even instead of a period at the end of a paragraph or a speech. Some writers — the poet Harrington, for example — unnecessarily sprinkled their pages with commas, for no apparent purpose, unless for a decorative effect.

In the first quarter of the fifteenth century one finds a loose use of points that look like reversed commas. Two inverted commas slightly above the line (“) were for a long time used at the beginning of lines to mark something significant or important, especially sententious utterances. These were not intended as quotation marks and were not employed at the end of the matter thus singled out for especial attention.

* For a fairly comprehensive discussion of this subject, see Professor George McKnight’s *Modern English in the Making*, 1928, pages 417–427.

The *period*, a very old point, known also as "dot" and "prick," usually marked the end of a sentence; but where it was perfectly obvious that the sentence was ended, the period was often omitted, and writers found it quite all right to use almost any mark (a semicolon, a virgule, etc.) instead of a period. The round point was often used before and after Roman and Arabic numerals instead of the more customary colon. Single letters, used as abbreviations for words and names, were followed by (and often also preceded by) a period; thus, for example, *.H.* meant "Henry," *.L.* meant "Lord" or



"Lordship," *.i.* meant *id est*, *.s.* meant *scilicet*, and so forth. Such abbreviations were called *sigla* (sigles), from the Latin word *sigillum* (a seal); a letter having a period at each side of it was called a *gemipunctus* (double-pricked), from Latin *geminus* and *punctus*. In John Heywood's play *Johan Johan* (1533) "many a hundred" is printed "many a .C." It is rather curious that some writers put their periods slightly above the line, thus retaining one of the salient characteristics of the time when rustic capitals were in general use. Another curious point to note about the period is that some penmen converted it into a comma when it was part of a question mark. The substitution of a semicolon or a virgule for a period was, in a sense, counter-

balanced by the substitution of a period for a comma, a colon, etc. As a result of a careless way of manipulating one's pen in going from one word to the next, many penmen's manuscripts, notably Thomas Heywood's, contain dots and dashes where no point is required.

The period was not infrequently doubled (..). This "double point" is occasionally found in manuscripts of even the second quarter of the seventeenth century. In hurried penmanship the double point was made exactly like a small *u* or *n* and linked to the preceding letter.

The *colon*, originally a single dot above the line (a "raised point") and denoting a full stop, was used very frequently, perhaps most frequently, after abbreviations, especially after the abbreviated names in the margins of dramatic manuscripts. Some penmen had no scruple about using a colon at the end of a line as an ornamental device or to fill up the line. In many manuscripts, as in *Edmund Ironside*, colons are used more frequently than any other punctuation mark, being used for commas, question marks, exclamation marks, and periods. This is true not only of the colon standing alone but even of the colon followed by a virgule (:/), a very common combination in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. Some dramatists used the colon as a signal for stage business and as a cue mark. But the most common places for the colons seem to have been just before and just after numerals and after (or within) abbreviations: *Ho:* stood for "Honor," *Ma:*^{ts} for "Majesty's" or "Majesties," etc.

The *semicolon*, like the colon, came in rather late, its use not becoming common till the third quarter of the sixteenth century. It was intended to mark a longer pause than a comma; but more often it seems to have been used to call attention to a pronounced transition from one idea to another. Modern editors have sometimes (as in *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore*) mistaken a comma adjoining a final secretary *e* for a semicolon because of the habit Elizabethan penmen had of terminating

such an *e* with a heavy little finial above the line and at a little distance from the body of the *e*.

An *inverted* or *reversed semicolon* (⁝), a fifteenth century punctuation mark, indicated a rather pronounced pause. In sixteenth century manuscripts it often takes the place of question marks, exclamation marks, and semicolons.

The *virgule* (the modern French word for "comma," from Latin *virgula*, a small rod), the oldest and most frequently employed punctuation mark in Renaissance documents, was a more or less oblique stroke, of considerable length, sometimes looped, and served both for a comma and for a period, as well as to mark the end of a stanza or a paragraph. From the fifteenth century on, scribes used it as a substitute for almost any punctuation mark whatsoever. In merchants' accounts it often took the place of a colon, as a substitute for *videlicet*. So accustomed were writers to the use of the virgule as a punctuation mark that they employed it where it was wholly unnecessary, as after a colon and even after a period. The virgule (No. 2) was sometimes flourished, sometimes looped, and some penmen — Thomas Heywood, for example — introduced a bend into its upper half, thus converting it into what sometimes looks like an elongated comma or the right half of an angular bracket (>). In dramatic manuscripts the virgule after a word or line may indicate stage business, as "kneeling."

The *question mark* was rather late in coming in; it found currency very slowly, probably because the order of the words sufficiently denoted the interrogatory character of the sentence. That is probably why most penmen were content to indicate the completion of the interrogative sentence with a comma, a period, a colon, or the virgule. The rather frequent use of the question mark in exclamatory sentences, both in manuscripts and in printed books, was probably due to the fact that so many questions partake of the character of exclamations. In shape the early question mark, often found within a sentence, was very much like an inverted semicolon, the dot being replaced

by a comma; many penmen, especially in France, made it almost horizontal (No. 3). Even those penmen who were acquainted with and made use of the question mark often preferred to use the virgule.

Exclamation marks seem to have found favor even later and more slowly than question marks. Their use was for a long time as lawless as that of the other new punctuation marks; though they seem never to have been used for other points, almost any other point could be used as a substitute for them. One of the most curious places for a colon was above the first word of an exclamation. Monsieur Chassant informs us, in his *Paléographie des chartes*, that in French documents from the eleventh century to the seventeenth the exclamation mark took any of the forms shown in No. 4.

A *dash* — a horizontal line of varying length — was somewhat late in coming into use. When it occurs, which is quite rarely in sixteenth century documents (there is not a single instance of it in the manuscript of *Edmund Ironside*), it indicates a sudden break in the thought, an aside, a stage direction (as "turning to another person"), an interruption, a parenthesis, or the omission of some words. The dash was either straight or curved. It was often employed, singly or doubled, at the end of a line merely to fill up the line. In early French documents the dash, often standing for a period or a virgule, was deeply curved and had a round dot under it (No. 5).

Parentheses, or "round brackets," were employed very early and with remarkable frequency, especially in dramatic dialogue. Exclamations, interjected phrases or sentences, vocative appellations, asides, significant adjectival or adverbial words and phrases, quotations, etc., were often enclosed within round or square brackets (crotchets) where now we use dashes or commas. The use of parentheses was very erratic, some penmen (Shakspere seems to have been one of these) using them a great deal, whereas others used them but little. In the play of *Edmund*

Ironside there are only four parentheses, once for the words "saith he." It should be noted that some writers — Thomas Heywood, for example — did not feel it necessary to indicate the end of the parenthesis.

Quotation marks seem to have been adopted with greater reluctance by penmen than any other punctuation mark. This may have been owing to the fact that the sense of such words as "saith he" made it clear that the matter was quoted. Medieval scribes underlined quoted matter. Some penmen indicated quoted matter by putting any one of the marks shown in No. 6 in front of each line of the quotation. *Edmund Ironside* nowhere indicates a quotation, not even where a letter is being read, except that once it presents the quoted words in Italic script. In *Johan Johan* quotations are introduced (but not ended) by virgules.

The *apostrophe*, also a comparatively late invention, had, like the virgule from which it was derived, various uses. Sometimes it took the place of an abbreviating stroke; sometimes it took the place of the *es*-flourish (*q.v.*); sometimes (before an *s*) it indicated the genitive singular, in these cases taking the place of an omitted *e*, as in *boy's* for "boyes"; after plural substantives ending in *s* it indicated, improperly, the possessive case; sometimes it denoted a metrical elision or a contraction, and not infrequently it betokened a pedantic (and erroneous) attempt at etymological accuracy, as in *y'on* for "yond," *ar't* for the verb "art," *ha's* or *h'as* for "has," *was't* for "wast," *do'st* for "dost," etc. Some writers seem never to have employed it, and others to have employed it very capriciously. The position of the apostrophe in abbreviated words was not definitely fixed, and so we find *tho'nely* for *th'onely* (the only), *'ore* for *o're* (*o'er*), *o'man* for *woman*, etc. Because of failure to take into consideration the frequent omission of the apostrophe by writers and printers, editors of Shakspere have frequently retained "with" in passages which clearly require *wi'th'* (with the) — for example, in *The Tempest* (I, i, 74).

A *hyphen* at the end of a line was not often employed. Penmen and printers divided syllables in any way they pleased, as in *agains-t*, without a hyphen. When the hyphen was used, it usually consisted of two short, parallel, horizontal or oblique strokes with or without a dot; in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it consisted of a single short oblique stroke. Compound words, as "craftsman," "free-born," were generally written as two words, without a hyphen.

One unaccustomed to old manuscripts is puzzled by the occurrence of certain marks (No. 7) at the ends of lines. These were inserted apparently to fill up the line, but sometimes they were undoubtedly intended to be only ornamental. They may easily be mistaken for letters, as for *n*, *m*, *p*, *v*, *x*, etc. Colons and virgules at the ends of lines are often not punctuation marks. Some penmen — even the writer of the celebrated letters of Junius (in the nineteenth century) — were in the habit of putting at the beginning of a line, in front of a divided word, the same mark (for example, a colon) which they employed at the end of the preceding line.

A *line* of shorter or greater length was frequently employed for the purpose of underlining important matter, so as to draw especial attention to it. A very frequent practice with playwrights was also to draw a line, sometimes with an initial serif, beneath the first word or words in the last line of each speaker's speech, thus separating off one speech from another. Some poets ran these lines clear across the page. Deletions were sometimes effected by drawing such a line or lines through the objectionable or erroneous word or words.

Deletion was indicated in various other ways. Sometimes the writer just smudged out the objectionable matter with his finger or a sponge as soon as he had written it; sometimes he scraped it out; sometimes he obliterated it with a large number of crisscross diagonal strokes or *x*'s or by a succession of spiral-like curves, or he covered the passage over with ink. An unusual method of deletion was to underline or put a dot under the objectionable letter, or a succession of dots under the letters of

the objectionable word or passage. In addition to these various methods some writers put the letter *d* (or the letters *del*), with or without a succeeding virgule, in the margin. To correct a mistake the writer put a dot under the wrong letter or letters and wrote the correction above the error. It is evident that such things were occasionally misinterpreted by copyists or compositors and that thus incorrect texts have been transmitted to posterity.

The insertion of an extra word or words between the lines was indicated by the use of the caret at the site of the interlineation. Various marks (No. 8) were used instead of a caret. Some writers wrote the omitted word or the correction in the margin, indicating the proper location of the correction by some such mark as a caret, an inverted caret, a virgule, or a double virgule. The caret was often omitted even where a word was interlined.

Braces were employed very much in the modern manner, especially in commercial accounts. Some dramatists and copyists used braces to separate stage directions from the text and the names of the speakers from the speeches.

Paragraph marks were of two essentially different kinds. Those which were used for headings usually consisted of a figure resembling double long (secretary) *s* (No. 9). Those which were employed for main subdivisions, for the opening line of a speech, and sometimes even for single lines and sentences, were evolved from a capital *C* (the initial letter of the word *Capitulum*, "Chapter"). In rapid writing these marks underwent considerable modification, as shown in No. 9 above.

Reference marks of all sorts, as circles, circles with *x*'s in them, triangles, inverted commas, *x*'s, Greek letters (sometimes inverted), were used to call attention to revisions, side notes, footnotes, etc.

Accents occur but rarely in documents written in English. Gabriel Harvey, in the marginalia with which he studded his

books, was in the habit of accenting the *a* of the ablative case in his Latin jottings even in the last decade of the sixteenth century. A few pedantic Englishmen, influenced by continental practice, put a mark (accent, semicircle, dot, etc.) over a *u* to distinguish it from an *n*, as is done in Germany to this day. As a result of foreign influence, no doubt, some pedantic penmen put an accent mark over some of their English *a*'s, though the mark had no meaning whatever. In early sixteenth century documents we occasionally find an accent or cedilla under an *e* to indicate that the letter is equivalent to Roman *ae* (*æ*). The dots and accents over English *i* and *y* have already been discussed. Monsieur Chassant (*op. cit.*) points out that in France the acute, grave, and circumflex accents, which are so characteristic of French orthography, were not known to the "old writers" and that they did not even use the cedilla (or cerilla) under the *c* (to indicate that the *c* was to be pronounced like an *s*).

Within recent years a novel hypothesis regarding the punctuation of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatic publications has been championed by certain English scholars, notably Mr. Percy Simpson, Professor Alfred W. Pollard, and Professor J. Dover Wilson. They say that in many of these publications, especially in the "good" Shakspere quartos and in the First Folio, the punctuation is rhetorical, rhythmical, elocutionary, rather than syntactical or grammatical. According to these writers, the punctuation marks found in such books are really in the nature of stage directions, instructions to the actors how to read the lines, where to pause for a sob, where to laugh, where to turn to another person, where to express scorn, where and how long to pause for emphasis, where to indulge in gesture, where to read hurriedly, and so forth.

That these claims are, to say the least, extravagant and fantastic is evident from the following considerations:

1. None of the early writings on punctuation and rhetoric — Ben Jonson's, for example — give the slightest hint that normal punctuation was determined by anything but syntactical and

respiratory considerations, that is, a regard for the grammatical structure of the sentence, the meaning, a desire to avoid error, and the giving of an opportunity to the reader to recover his breath.

2. It so happens that in many instances where the rhythm requires a pause, the meaning also requires it. The coincidence, being accidental, proves nothing as to a system of dramatic punctuation.

3. A purely objective examination of the punctuation of the most accurately printed plays in the Folio shows, as Professor Raymond Alden pointed out, that the printers were not consistent in their use of punctuation marks. Thus, for example, they sometimes preceded with a comma the words indicative of the vocative address, sometimes followed them with a comma, sometimes printed them within round brackets, and sometimes printed them without any punctuation mark. This diversity is sufficient to prove that no system was followed in the use of punctuation marks.

4. Reading the plays or the poems with a regard for their punctuation in the original texts would result in an unintelligible and often ludicrous jumble of words. Any actor who attempted to read, for example, the deposition scene in *Richard the Second*, as it is printed in the Folio, would be hooted off the stage.

5. The quartos and the Folio often have no punctuation marks whatsoever, even where both the rhythm and the sense cry for them.

6. The proponents of the theory of "dramatic punctuation" ignore all the thousands of instances in which the printed text does not conform to their theory. In many instances they resort to obviously fantastic interpretations of the text in the attempt to justify Mr. Simpson's "discovery."

7. The punctuation of the early printed plays is that of the printers, not of the playwrights, as is proved by a comparison of extant manuscripts and their printed counterparts, as, for example, certain scenes in Heywood's manuscript of *Calisto* and

the corresponding scenes in *The Silver Age* and *The Golden Age*. In the first quarto of *The Silver Age* (1613), signature C3, a speech of Jupiter's is printed thus:

> Earth before heauen, we once more haue preferd: . . .
> The faire *Alcmena* like the Sea-mans Starre
> Shooting her glistering beauty vp to heauen,
> Hath puld from thence the olimpick *Jupiter*
> By vertue of thy raies, let *Iuno* skold,
> And with her clamours fill the eares of heauen,
> Let her bee like a Bachinall in rage,
> And through our christall pallace breath exclaimes,
> With her quicke feete the galaxia weare,
> And with inquisitiue voice search through the Spheares.
> Shee shall not find vs here, or should shee see vs,
> Can shee distinguish vs being thus transhapt?
> Wher's *Ganimed?* we sent him to suruey
> *Amphitrioes* Pallace, where we meane to lodge

In the manuscript version of this scene in his réchauffé entitled *Calisto*, Heywood, having in all probability the printed copy before him, transcribed the above speech as follows:

> Earthe beeffore heaven wee once more have preferrd
> The ffayre Alcmena lyke the sea-manns starr
> shootinnge her luminous bewty vpp to heaven
> hath puld ffrom thence Olimpick Jupiter
> by vertue off her rayes. and semele,
> no more remembred, nowe lett Juno skold
> and w[i]th her Clamours fill the Eares off Heaven
> or bee shee lyke a bachinall Jnradgd.
> and throuugh our Christall pallace voyce exclaim
> w[i]th her swift ffeete the galaxia weare
> and make it brighter by her often tread.
> shee shall not find vs here, or say shee shoold
> howe Can shee knowe vs beeinnge thus transhapt
> where's ganimed, wee sent him to survay
> Amphitrioes pallace where wee meane to lodg

8. Extant manuscript prompt books, as, for example, Heywood's *The Captives*, Mundy's *John-a-Kent and John-a-Cumber*,

Massinger's *Believe As You List*, show no trace of what might be called an exclusively dramatic or elocutionary punctuation.

9. From a detailed comparison of two Elizabethan manuscripts and their printed counterparts, Mr. Edwin J. Howard has recently shown that printers of those days paid but little attention to the pointing of their manuscript copies and that they punctuated as they saw fit.

10. That Elizabethan dramatists paid almost no attention whatsoever to punctuation is strikingly evidenced by the very scanty and haphazard — and often meaningless — punctuation to be found in the manuscripts of such an actor-playwright as Thomas Heywood. Even the author of the revised insurrection scene in *Sir Thomas Moore*, whom a handful of English scholars still regard, erroneously, as having been Shakspere himself,* employed exceedingly few punctuation marks (and no emphasis capitals!) and even those few evidently without regard to either sense or rhythm. In confirmation of this statement, the following passage may be quoted:

> tell me but this what rebell captaine
> as mutynes ar incident, by his name
> can still the rout who will obay a traytor
> or howe can well that p(ro)clamation sounde
> when ther is no adicion but a rebell
> to quallyfy a rebell, youle put downe straingers
> kill them cutt their throts possesse their howses
> and leade the mātie of lawe in liom
> to slipp him lyke a hound, say nowe the king
> as he is clement, yf thoffender moorne
> shoold so much com to short of your great trespas
> as but to banysh you, whether woold you go.
> what Country by the nature of yor error
> shoold gyve you harber go you to ffraun[c]e or flanders
> to any Jarman p(ro)vince, spane or portigall
> nay any where that not adheres to Ingland
> why you must needs be straingers. woold you be pleasd
> to find a nation of such barbarous temper

* For proof that Shakspere was not the author of "the Addition," see my book *Shakspere and "Sir Thomas Moore,"* New York, 1929.

that breaking out in hiddious violence
woold not afoord you, an abode on earth
whett their detested knyves against yor throtes
spurne you lyke doggs, and lyke as yf that god
owed not nor made not you, nor that the elaments
were not all appropriat to yor Comforts.
but Charterd vnto them, what woold you thinck
to be thus vsd, this is the straingers case

Let it be noted that in the above excerpt from Sir Thomas More's highly argumentative and persuasive address to a turbulent and rebellious multitude there are only eleven commas (twice where no punctuation is required, four times when a much heavier mark is required), and only three periods (once instead of a question mark, once instead of an exclamation mark, once instead of a comma), and there are no question marks, no exclamation marks, no semicolons, no colons, no brackets, and no dashes, and that necessary commas, periods, etc., are conspicuously wanting. And let it also be borne in mind that the above address has come down to us as it was left not only by the author but after it had been corrected by the "book-keeper," stage director, and prompter — Thomas Kyd, a veteran playwright.

Chapter VII

NUMERALS

In England the Arabic system of numeration, known as algorithm (or algorism), did not begin to become current to any appreciable extent till the end of the fifteenth century, though it was known much earlier. After that it gradually became more and more popular for business purposes, although writing masters did not depict the Arabic figures in their text-books till the end of the seventeenth century. But Mr. Hilary Jenkinson has recently shown that in the middle of the sixteenth century Arabic numerals were freely used in England, as, for example, in the so-called "common paper" of the Company of Scriveners of London. In France too the Arabic numerals did not come into general use till the end of the fifteenth century, and into official and legal documents until the sixteenth century. In scientific treatises — in books on mathematics, geometry, and astronomy — Arabic numerals were employed long before. Notwithstanding this, Roman numerals and the Roman system of numeration continued in use for many purposes till the nineteenth century. As a striking illustration of how slowly and diffidently new things are adopted, it may be noted that even up to about one hundred years ago many persons still combined both systems — for example, even to the extent of writing 12 thus: *x2*.

Roman Numerals

The Roman equivalent for the numeral 1 was an *i* or a *j*. At first such an *i* or *j* was undotted (unaccented). A *j* was preferred when it stood alone or as the last figure in a number. In sixteenth century documents one often finds a dotted *i* for

1 even in an Arabic number, as in *155i.* "One-half" was often represented by a bisected *j*, but as a rule it was represented by the letters *di* (from the Latin *dimidium*) or *s* (*semis*) after the preceding numeral. "One-eighth" — for example, of a yard — was written *di. quarter; quarter*, standing alone, meant "and a quarter"; for "three-eighths" they wrote *quarter di.* A "nail" meant two and a quarter inches as well as eight pounds.

V or *v* (an ideogram of the open hand) stood for "five"; *X* or *x* (an ideogram of the two hands) for "ten"; *C* or *c* for "one hundred"; *L* or *l* for "fifty"; *D* for "five hundred"; *M* (especially the uncial form) or M^l for "one thousand"; "four" was written *iv* or *iiij.* In writing "thousands" an *M* (or M^l) was placed to the right and above the last numeral, as iv^M = 4,000; to write "hundreds" a *C* (or *c*) was placed above and to the right of the last numeral, as ix^c = 900; and so forth. But there was no rule against making as many *C*'s as there were hundreds; hence 1533, for example, could be and was written thus: *.M..CCCCC. and xxxiij.* When writing multiples of twenty the scribe or accountant put *xx* just above (rarely above and to the right of) the last figure or figures in the number, as $\overset{xx}{iiij}$ = 4 × 20 = 80. Hence 1928 would have been written as follows: $j^M\ ix^C\ \overset{xx}{j}\ viij$; 583 would have been written like this: $v^C\ \overset{xx}{iiij}\ iij$; 1525 was written thus: *M. v. xxv;* in 1600 a scribe wrote 251 thus: *ijClj*, though he could have written *CC.* $\overset{xx}{ij}$. *xj.* There were no definite rules about these things.

In writing an ordinal number the terminal letters *do* (as in *secundo*), *o* (as in *tertio*, *primo*), *to* (as in xxv^{to} for "twenty-fifth"), *no* (as in $xxix^{no}$ for "twenty-ninth"), *th* (as in "fourth"), etc., were written as superior letters. Instead of writing *th* after a number, some penmen wrote *tie* (as $xxiv^{tie}$ for $xxiv^{th}$). When superior *th* follows a number above twenty (except multiples of ten) as in 22^{th}, the number is not to be read *twenty-twoth* but *the two and twentieth.*

Though we no longer employ superior letters in connection

with cardinal numbers, Elizabethan penmen did so. They wrote, for example, *iiij*^{or} for "four" (evidently the Latin *quatuor*), even in English documents; *xx*^{ti}, *xx*^{tie}, or *xx*^{ty} for "twenty," *l*^{tie} for "fifty," etc.; occasionally they even wrote *ij*^{o} for "two," *iij*^{re} for "three," *iiij*^{re} for "four(e)"; and *C*^{d} for "hundred."

Dates were often preceded by the French word *le* or *Le*, as in *Le firste of Octobar*. A remnant of this medieval usage occurs also in certain legal documents written in Latin, as in the words *le recknynge* in the coroner's report on the death of Marlowe.

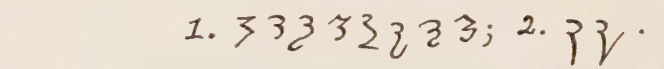
Arabic Numerals

By the sixteenth century the Arabic numerals had undergone so much modification that they closely resembled the numerals of today. As a matter of fact, in Ugo da Carpi's *Thesauro de scrittori*, published in 1525, they are exactly like those in general use today. But as they were generally written in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and even in the sixteenth, they differ from ours to such an extent that we must say something about them here.

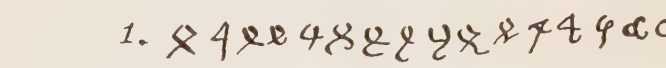
1. — For *1* (No. 1) many writers made a small *i* (dotted or undotted), even though they employed the Arabic numerals. When the *i* was undotted or unaccented it was often difficult to distinguish it from a *2* (because of the presence of an initial and a terminal hook). Sometimes a *1* was traversed by a horizontal stroke. "One-half" was expressed by a *1* over a *2* or by a *j* bisected by its loop (No. 2).

2. — The *2* may be difficult to recognize in the writing of a scribe who terminated the figure with a vertical (instead of a

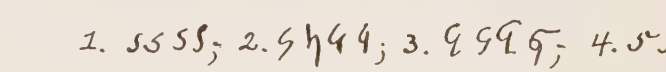
horizontal) stroke (No. 1). It may be mistaken for a *1*, a *3*, or a *7*. Incredible though it may sound, it is a fact that some persons — Thomas Heywood, for example — sometimes used the figure *2* for the word "too."



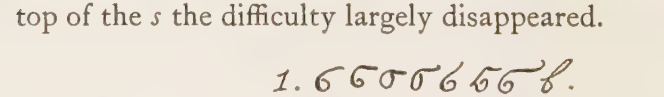
3. — The *3* is usually identical with our figure, but some penmen still retained the fourteenth century form with the infralinear curved tail (No. 1). Sometimes it terminated in a long vertical stroke (No. 2).



4. — The *4* is not always easily recognized today because it often bears a close resemblance to the ancient figure (No. 1). A crossed *1* is very like a poorly made *4;* when the descender of the *4* is perpendicular, it may easily be mistaken for a *9* or a *1* with an initial flourish.

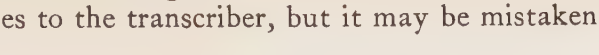


5. — The *5* is usually a difficult figure to recognize. In the sixteenth century it was made very much after the pattern of our lower-case printed *s* (No. 1). Many sixteenth century scribes made it almost like a poorly constructed Italic *h* (No. 2), that is, without a horizontal cross-stroke at the top; and some made it like our open *9* (No. 3); in some hands it resembled a *q* or an inverted *s;* in the hands of many it looked like our modern *4* (No. 3). When the horizontal curl was added to the top of the *s* the difficulty largely disappeared.



6. — The *6*, made with three actions of the pen, bore for a long time a striking resemblance to a small secretary capital *G*

and sometimes to a sigma (No. 1) or a *b*. It rarely presents any difficulties to the transcriber, but it may be mistaken for a *b*.



7. — The *7* seems always to have been a troublesome figure. In the fourteenth century it looked very much like a current Greek lambda or a lower-case *a* (No. 1); gradually it degenerated into a kind of acute angle (resembling a triangle without a base); then the left side of the angle was elevated and the figure began to be something like our *7* (No. 2), although it often looked like a *1* and sometimes like a *2* (in the hands of penmen who did not terminate their *2* with a horizontal stroke to the right). In many documents the *7* has a horizontal crossbar near the top (No. 3), no doubt to distinguish it from other figures.

8. — The *8* was often made in such a way that it looked like a lower-case *g* or a *9* (No. 1). Later on some penmen made their *8* in such a way that it resembled a poorly made *s* (and therefore a *5*) more than anything else (No. 2); many made a horizontal *8* which looks like our sign of infinity (No. 3).

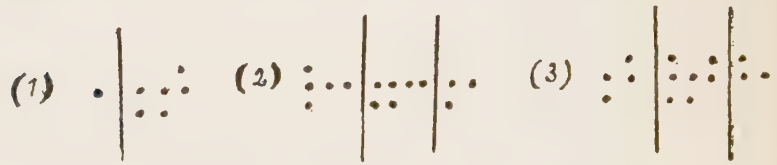
9. — The *9*, made with two actions of the pen, resembles certain types of *g*, *q*, and the ordinary *us*-sign; in the hands of some penmen it resembles a *2*, an *8*, or a *y* (No. 1).

0. — The zero is like the letter *o*, but sometimes has a diagonal stroke, or even two such strokes, through it (No. 1).

A zero with a vertical stroke through it, if made with one action of the pen, resembles a certain variety of secretary *e* (No. 2). Made with two actions of the pen, both from above downward, the zero may be mistaken for a *9*.

Calculation by Dots

Inasmuch as even sixteenth century documents contain marginal calculations by dots, the system must be explained. It seems that when a penman was making up an account he would do his figuring in the margin with a system of dots and would then insert the result in Roman numerals into his text. The method consisted of drawing two short perpendicular lines about a quarter of an inch apart; the space between these lines was reserved for shillings; the space to the right, for pence; and



the space to the left, for pounds. Dots on and below the horizontal line represented units. Each dot above the line on the left-hand side in the columns for pounds and shillings counted for ten; on the right-hand side, for five. In the pence column a dot above the line and on the left-hand side counted for six. If there were no pence the scribe made only one perpendicular line, the pounds being to the left of it and the shillings to the right. If there were three perpendiculars the space to the extreme right was for farthings. A few illustrative examples will make this clear:

In No. 1 we have one dot in the pounds column (= £1), three dots on the line and two dots below the line in the shillings column (= 5s.), and one dot above the line and to the right in the shillings column (= 5s.). The total equals £1 10s.

In No. 2 we have three dots on the line and one dot below

the line in the pounds column (= £4), one dot to the left and above the line in the pounds column (= £10), four dots on the line and two dots below the line in the shillings column (= 6s.), two dots on the line and one below in the pence column (= 3d.). The total equals £14 6s. 3d.

In No. 3 we have on the unit line in the pounds column two dots and one below it (= £3); there is one dot above and to the right (= £5), hence a total of £8; in the shillings column we have three dots on the line and two below it (= 5s.), one dot above and to the left (= 10s.), and one dot above and to the right (= 5s.), hence a total of 20s. or £1; in the pence column we have two dots on the line (= 2d.) and one dot above and to the left (= 6d.), hence a total of 8d. Example 3 therefore represents £9 0s. 8d.

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FACSIMILES AND TRANSCRIPTS

NOTE

In his efforts to read the ensuing specimens of Renaissance script, the student is advised (1) not to look at the transcripts until he has made a conscientious attempt to decipher any given specimen or word; (2) to employ a magnifying glass, preferably one having a magnifying power of three or four diameters, whenever he strikes a snag; and (3) to go over any difficult word with the point of a dry pen, so as to get the feel of the letters as they were written.

The transcripts are as nearly exact transcripts of the originals as ordinary type permits. Abbreviations, symbols, and brevigraphs, except w^t (with), y^e (the), y^t (that) and a few others, are, however, extended, the supplied letters and symbol equivalents being printed in parentheses. Words within square brackets represent deletions; letters and words preceded by a left bracket replace omissions resulting from the shearing of a plate.

The original of Plate VII is in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin; the original of Plate X is the property of Mr. Albert S. Osborn, of New York; the other documents belong to the British Government and are in the British Museum.

It is to be regretted that in Plate II, owing to the process employed in making the facsimile, some of the very fine strokes, especially the tails of some *y*'s have not been reproduced.

Plate I

PART OF A LETTER FROM QUEEN PHILIPPA, JULY 6, 1339

Ph(ilipp)e par la grace de dieu Rome Denglet(er)re Dame Dirlande & Duchesse Daqu(itain)e∫ as reu . . .
de seint Paul de Londres∫ salutz. Come n(ost)re bien amez Maistre Henry de Jdesworth(e), Chan . . .
lassez a n(ost)re ch(er) clerc Maistre Rober(t) de Chikewell(e) nostre Chanceller les maisouns q(u)il auoit . . .
eux si est plus pleinement contenu, et le dit Maistre Rober(t) soit en volente & en ferm p(ur)pos . . .
constages, quelles il harreit molt a faire sil neust plus seur estat q(u)il nad as maisouns ana . . .
loiale peniblete, queux nous auoms trouez en la persone de n(ost)re dit Clerc de long temps passe . . .
tourneur a hon(ur) & a p(ro)fit∫ vous prioms ch(er)ement q(u)e p(ur) consideracion diceste n(ost)re priere vou . . .
& de ratefier au terme de la vie de n(ost)re dit Clerc lestat q(u)il ad en mesmes les maisouns p . . .
dicelles endent(ur)es queles vous ent p(ur)ront estre mousters & baillees. Et ce ne vueilletz lesser . . .
certem̃ement q(u)e p(ar)mi la grace & la suete queles vous enferretz au dit Maistre Rober(t) par e . . .
droit especialment bon gree, & si s(er)roms toutesfoitz le plus preste a faire toute manere . . .
tourner droitment a plaisance. Tresch(er)s & bien amez dieu vous eit en sa garde. Do . . .
lan du regne nostre tresch(er) Seigneur le Roi treszime.

Phe par la grace de dieu Roine Dengleterre Dame Dyrlande & Duchesse Daquid Ses feu
de cest paul de Dindres Salutz. Come nre bien amez syr Phe Dessbozth Chan
lleir a nre ch dere syr Robert de Chicchest nostre Chancellier les maisdins qil auoit
eux si est plus plemement contenu: et le dit syr Robert ent en Dolence & en Sym Spus
constages: quelles il hayent mote a Sime sil neust plus ceux estat qil nad as maisdins Auit
Sale pmblee: queux nous auoms done en la psone de nre dit clerc de long temps passe
tousiours a bon & a este Sous ppos chement & p consideracion diceste nre ppse Sous
& de pferer au regne de la Roe de nre dit clerc lestat qil ad en mesmes les maisdins &
diceulx endentes quelles Sous ent Sime estre monstrees & baillees. Et ce ne Souellez lessy
cptemement & pmis la grace & la auore quelles Sous enseignez au dit syr Robert pay e
dpot especialment bon grace & si nous Sous tenez les plus preste a Sime touche mandez
tousiours diligemment a plaisance. Et Sestre & bien amez dieu Sous ait en sa garde. Do
Dan du regne nostre tresch Seigneur le Sen tresime.

Plate II

A PAGE OF "THE POEM OF CLAUDIAN," 1445

The first parte

Preface.

In Ruffynes [1] legende which late was write: [2] stilico [3] hath preysing(is) [4] armyd [5]
Our muse now more mylde. w[t] losyd [6] stryngis: i(n) songe shal gyn to telle
with what maners.[7] and w[t] what love: this dred p(ri)nce rulyd the worlde
with whos preyers he lyst be mevid [8] to clothe him in his roobys [9]
And grauntid oo [10] yere thestate [11] to take: as consulers vsid before./
Benygnyte [12] is descryed techyng stilico the prynce. /
The keper [13] of the worlde Clemencia callyd: [14] which chase [15] hir first place
Jn iupiters girdil [16] that [17] partith a sundir: grete hetis [18] fro(m) y[e] colde
which [19] grettest is namyd of hevenly duellers: [20] for cleme(n)s first had ruthe [21]
Of [22] the vnshaply [23] begynnyng worlde: wha(n) al thing lackid dieu [24] forme
And with her bright chere [25] put thirkenes [26] aside. yivyng [27] lighte to erthys.[28]
This goddesse the stilico [29] as temple vsith: & as offryng at awtrys [30]
where frankencens and swete odourys: to hir w[t] fire is yove [31]
Her principal [32] sees. high in thy brest: she hath provided to be.
The techyng evir that thou sholdist deme: [33] & nevir as manhode holde. / [34]
Oo man reioise a nothirs [35] peyne: or othirs deth desire.
That in thi peas [36] thou sholdist so breke: cruel martys decrees
As by the to longe haterede: [37] occasion noon were yove.[38]
That to trespassours thou sholdist pardon: frely askid graunte
And Jre soone shuldist put awey: seldome thou shuldist it meve [39]
Onmevable thou owist [40] not endure: wha(n) benygne preyers be offird
To truthe distroye al aduersaunt(es): [41] and thingis to the [42] submytted
Nevir sett i(n) herte [43] as the lyon dooth / : which [gladly] ovirthrowith
wilde boolys [44]
And smaler beestis [45] lettyth renne [46] beside: not oonys [47] vpon he(m) [48] lokith
Thus by Clemens taught is stilico: as childe enformyd by mastresse.[49]

[1] Rufinus' [2] written [3] Stilicho [4] with praises [5] covered [6] loosed (relaxed) [7] virtues [8] moved [9] robes [10] one [11] the estate, the government [12] Clemency [13] guardian [14] was called [15] chose [16] sphere [17] who [18] heat [19] and who [20] dwellers [21] pity [22] on [23] chaotic [24] due [25] countenance [26] darkness [27] giving [28] the earth [29] our Stilicho [30] altars [31] offered up [32] essence [33] heed [34] mankind practices [35] at another's [36] peace [37] hatred [38] given [39] move, urge [40] wouldst [41] opponents [42] thee [43] hurt [44] bulls [45] animals [46] run [47] once, even [48] them [49] governess

The first parte

Prefatce.

Thaffynes legende which late was write: ſithen hath pierſyng' drayd
Our muſe now more myldē & loſid ſtryngis: ī ſonge ſhal gyn to telle
With whatt maneres and wt whatt love: this dred place rulid the worlde.
With whos prayers he hyſt be medid to clothe him in this vesture
And grauntid oo yere theſette to take: as conſilers vsid before.

Beaugayte is deſtryed techyng ſithen the prynce.

The keper of the worlde elementar callid: which chase hir firſt place
In vpptures gwdl that paſſith a ſtundir: grete hete fro p colde
Which gretteſt is namyd of helewith dwellers: for demōes firſt had make
Of the vnſhaply begynnyng worlde: whā al ping lackid dren ſcune
And with her bright chere put thirkenes aſide: ryding lite to erthys
This gallaſſe the ſithen as temple vſith: t as offryng ett Alwyis
Were frankencens and ſwete odouris: to hir. wt fire of yore
Ca principal ſeed: high in thy breſt: ſhe hath provided to be.
The techyng dour that thou ſholdiſt deme: t nedir as manhode holde.
Do man reioiſe a nothing perue: or othirs deth deſire.
That in thi pees thou ſholdiſt p breke: cruel maters deuyces
And by the to longe hatereda: occaſion nam vere yore.
That to treſpaſſours thou ſholdiſt pardon: ſuch aſkid grauntte
And ſone ſhuldiſt put away: ſeldome thou ſhuldiſt te medle
Vnredable thou owiſt not endure: whā beaugayte prayers be offrid
To truthe diſtroye al adverſaunte: and thurgis to the ſubmytted
Adour ſatt ī herte as the hyon doth: which owirthwoth wille lowys
And ſmaler beeſtis lettyth reume beſide: nor coueys vpon hā lokith
Thus by elemens taught is ſtilled: as childa enfaunyd br vnſtraſſe.

Plate III

A PAGE OF CHAUCER'S "LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN," BEFORE 1450

Al be hit [1] / that he kan nat [2] wel endite
yet hath(e) he made / lewde folke delyte
To serve yow / in preysinge of your name
he made the book / that hight(e) the hous of ffame
and eke the deeth / of Blaunche the Duchesse
And the p(ar)lement of foules / as I gesse
And al the love / of Palamon(e) and Arcite
Of Thebes / thogh the storye ys knowen(e) lyte [3]
And many an ympne / [4] for your halydayes
That highten(e) balades / roundels virelays
And for to speke / of other holynesse
he hath(e) in proce / [5] translated Boece
And maade [6] the lyfe also of seynt Cecile
he made also / goon(e) ys a grete while
Origenes / vpon(e) the Mandeleyne
hym oughte now / to have the lesse peyne
he hath(e) maade many alay [7] and many a thinge
Now as ye be a god / and eke a kynge
I your Alceste / whilom(e) quene of Trace
y aske yow this man(e) / ryght(e) of your grace
That ye him never hurte / in all his lyve
And he shal sweren(e) to yow / and that blyve [8]
he shall neuer more / agilten [9] in this wyse
But shal maken(e) / as ye wol deuyse
Of wo(m)men(e) trewe / in lovyng al hire lyfe
Wherso ye wol / of mayden or of wyfe
And forthren(e) [10] yow / as muche as he mysseyde [11]
Or in the Rose / or elles in Creseyde
The god of love / answerede hire anoon(e)
Madame quod he / it is so long agoon(e)
That I yow knewe / so charitable and trewe
That neuer yit / syn that the worlde was newe
To me / ne founde y better noon(e) [12] than(e) yee
If that ye wolde / save my degree
I may ne wol nat / werne [13] your requeste
Al lyeth(e) in yow / dooth(e) wyth(e) hym(e) / as yow liste
I al foryeve / [14] withouten(e) lenger space

[1] Albeit [2] not [3] little [4] hymn [5] prose [6] *i.e.*, wrote [7] a lay [8] believe [9] sin [10] further [11] said amiss [12] no one [13] warn [14] forgive

Ye be hit that he kan nat wel endite
Yet hath he made leyde folke delyte
To serve yow in preysinge of youre name
He made the book that highte the hous of fame
And eke the deeth of blaunche the Duchesse
And the parlement of foules as I gesse
And al the love of palamon and arcite
Of thebes though the storye ye knowen hit
And many an ymayne for youre halydayes
That highten balades roundels virelayes
And for to speke of other holynesse
He hath in prose translated boece
And maade the bysshe also of seynt cecile
He made also goon yer a grete while
Origenes upon the nature pleyne
Hym oughte now to have the lesse peyne
He hath maade many a thinge
Now as ye be a god and eke a kynge
Of youre nature whilom quene of trace
I aske yow this maid vyrgyne of youre grace
That ye hym never hinder in al his lyve
And he shal sitten to yow and thanke blyve
He shal never more agilten in this wyse
But shal maken as ye wol devyse
Of wommen trewe in lovyng al hire lyve
Wherso ye wol of mayden or of wyve
And forthward yow as muche as he myghte
Or in the stede or elles in certeyne
The god of love answerede hire anoon
Madame quod he hit is so long agoon
That I yow knewe so charitable and trewe
That never yit syn that the worlde was newe
To me ne founde I better noon than yee
Of that ye wolde have my degree
I may nat wol nat werne youre requeste
Al hath in yow deeth wyth hym as yow liste
I al forgyve with conseil lenger space

Plate IV

A PAGE OF "THE WARS OF ALEXANDER," ABOUT 1450

Bot sen yis [1] vse is her(e) vnhono(ur)able her(e) J yam̃ [2] leue–
Braidis [3] yai(m) furth w^{t}outen bade [4] ye butlers yai(m) yeld(is) [5]
now sothely [6] q(uod) yañ [7] ilk a segge [8] softly togedir(e) [9]
yis man(er) [10] at he melis [11] of is menskefull [12] & noble
than [13] was thar(e) ane proude pere [14] a prince at ye table
Anepo y^{t} oñ Alex(ander) all way [15] be haldis [16]
yan mynes [17] him anes [18] in Messedone he had y^{e} man sene
quen [19] he was sent to his syre to feche [20] yair(e) trouag(e) [21]
His v(er)tuse & his vysage his voise he remenbris [22]
His fo(ur)me & his fetuor(e) [23] his fygour(e) a vysis [24]
He studis & he stuynes [25] he stemes [27] w^{t} in [27]
Js yis noght [28] Ph(ilip) soñ ye firs [29] ye fedar(e) [30] of grece
W^{t} y^{t} he sleghly [31] vp soght [32] & his sete leuys [33]
Droghe [34] him euyn to s(er) Dary [35] thar(e) he on dese [36] bydis [37]
Said surely s(er) yis sandisman [38] y^{t} sitt(is) yow be forne
Js Alex(ander) him awen self or all myñ ame [39] faillis [40]
Sone yis gou(er)no(ur) of grece is of yis gaude [41] war(e)[42]
He torkans [43] w^{t} & vndir(e)tuke [44] he touched of hi(m) selfe
Herd [45] a nyngkiling [46] of his name & nayt(is) [47] him to ryse
Buskis [48] hi(m) vp at a braide [49] & fra ye burde [50] rysys
He tas [51] a torche fra a tulke [52] y^{t} by ye table standis
ffelly [53] fangis [54] it [I] in his fist & to his fole [55] wyndis [56]
ffyndis him fair(e) [57] him before yar(e) [58] he him feste [59] hade
Raght [60] him radly [61] ye reyne & oñ his rige [62] worthis [63]
W^{t} y^{t} he brochis [64] his blonke [65] y^{t} y^{e} blode fames [66]
Sparis [67] out spacly [68] as sparke out of gledes [69]
Be [70] y^{e} light at [71] he he led [72] laches [73] he ye way
And fand(is) [74] fast [75] to ye flight w^{t} a fers will
ye pepill of ye palais quen yai his passe [76] saghe [77]
Rusches vp [78] in a res [79] rynnes [80] in-to chambres

[1] But since this [2] them [3] snatches [4] delay [5] relinquishes (to) [6] truly [7] then [8] man [9] together [10] custom [11] speaks [12] manly [13] then [14] peer [15] continually [16] gazes [17] remembers [18] once [19] when [20] fetch [21] their tribute [22] remembers [23] Error for "fetoure" (features). [24] notes [25] is amazed [26] speaks (thinks) [27] within [28] not [29] fierce [30] feeder [31] slyly [32] got up [33] leaves [34] draws [35] Darius [36] dais [37] seats [38] messenger [39] suspicion [40] is wrong [41] trick [42] aware [43] turns towards [44] understood [45] heard [46] inkling, mention [47] begins [48] prepares [49] moment [50] board [51] takes [52] soldier [53] fiercely [54] seizes [55] foal [56] goes [57] exactly [58] where [59] placed [60] caught [61] quickly [62] back [63] mounts [64] pricks [65] horse [66] foams [67] darts [68] quickly [69] burning coals [70] by [71] which [72] carried [73] takes [74] takes [75] steadfastly [76] departure [77] saw [78] after [79] race, hurry [80] run

Wherein ye Kyng & hys honorable hoyt ⁊ pauy[lion]
Duryng pat fyrth abouton bade ye buttlys pat zolde
nede oothe ⁊ pat ilk a zeggo eaft hy to study
ye man at he mo ho of ye marfhe full ⁊ noble
pan Duc pap ano pronde pope a zynnar at ye table
anoyo ⁊ on alay att day he hilde
pan mynor hi anoo m̃ goffedons he had ⁊ man eono
ynon he dud fent to hio fyre to forche pay zonge
hio ſtruſt hio eyſage hio boſſe he pomenyo
hio ſom̃o ⁊ hio fotnoy hio fygom̃ a eyſſo
he ſtudio ⁊ he ſtynnar he ſtomar &c m̃
ge ynon nopt ꝑth com̃ ye fyre ye ſoday of zeow
&t ⁊ he clozly op eopt ⁊ hio aeto lomy
Dyge hm̃ anyw to ⁊ dayl pay he ow dyſe hydio
Sud anoby ⁊ pie oandſman ⁊ ottf zod he ſeno
ze d lay hm̃ adon aelf or att myd amoſtuho
Come pie zondo of zeow ut of pie zande day
he reknno &t ⁊ Sudy tnke he touched of hi aelfe
hedd a mynkling of hio namo ⁊ nayff hi to ryſſe
zuſkio hi dyo at a blande ⁊ ſtaye binde yſſo
he tac a tazcho fyd a tuſke yt by ye table ſtandio
ſtelly ſangio ut hm̃ hio fiſt ⁊ to hio ſolo depndio
ſtyndio hm̃ ſay hm̃ he ſeeo pap he him ſoſſe hade
ſayt hm̃ yadly ye joyno ⁊ on hio ryge daethio
&t ye he brotho hio blonkio ⁊ ye blodo ſamo
dyaye out opacly a opayle ait of ⁊ledde
the ye liyt ſtt he kid fachar he ye day
Dud ſand firſt to ye ſlyt &t a foyo dyſt
pie pegatt of ye palano ynon pan hio paſſe zago
Fenſtroo op m a yoo yymnat m to chambyoo

Plate V

PART OF A LEGAL DOCUMENT, 1457

This endenture made betwix Thomas Priour(e) of Cant(er)bury on that oon(e) [1] partie. and alisand . . .
Adesh(a)m in the Counte of kent Meller [2] on that other partie wittnesseth that the seid Priour(e) hath . . .
the seid alisandr(e) his wyndemell(e) of westclyve beside Cowlynge next Rowchestr(e) in the Counte . . .
to holde the seid wyndemell(e) with his. app(ur)ten(au)nces to the forseid alisandre his. executo(r)s or his
of annunciacion(e) of oure lady next comynge after the date of this. vnto the end and t(er)me of . . .
and fully to be endid Payinge yerely the seid alisandre for the seid wyndemell(e) vnto the ffor . . .
Successours in hand. halfe yere afore that is to sey bifore anumciacion(e) of oure lady xxiij.s . . .
next suyinge [3] xxiij.s. iiijd/ by even(e) porcions The seid alisandr(e) to fynde alle man(er)e goyinge gere [4] . . .
and staves. and Seyleclothes duringe the seid t(er)me/. and the forseid Priour(e) shall fynde and . . .
as of yron(e)werk Tymberwerke. and helying [5] of the seid Melle. and the seid Priour(e) graunteth a . . .
alisandr(e) at his comynge ynne the Seyleclothes. withowte ony surrendr(e) in his goyinge owte/ a . . .
wole [6] and g(rau)nteth. that if he be bihinde of his fferme aforseid at eny thus abovewriten by th . . .
that hit shall be leeffull [7] vnto the forseid Priour(e) or his Successours. in the forseid wyndemel . . .
to distreigne and the distresse so to kepe. and withholde vnto the tyme the seid fferme for wi . . .
be./ be fully contentid and satisfied, And if so be no distresse lawfull(e) withynne the seid w . . .
the seid Priour(e) or his successours. into the seid Wyndemell(e) to reentre and to haue hit in his

[1] one [2] miller [3] ensuing [4] running machinery [5] repairing [6] wills [7] lawful

This indenture made betwix Thomas Prior of Cantorbury on that oon pte and Alysan
adoghit in the Cornte of Kent wydowe on that other pte witnessith that the said Prior hath
the said Alysandre his Tenement of Bostcrete beside Rochestre next Rochestre in the Cornte
to holde the said Tenement with his Appurtenncs to the forsaid Alysandre his executors or his
of Annunciacion of oure lady next comynge after the Date of this unto the ende and tme of
And fully to be endid paynge yerely the said Alysandre for the said Tenement unto the forsaid
Successours in hand halfe yere afore that is to say afore Annunciacion of oure lady next
next comynge yeldyng & paying therfor the said Alysandre to finde all maner of
and stabar and Oxyloctches duringe the said tme / And the forsaid Prior shall finde and
as of Tymbrerk Tymbre Werke and Helyng of the said wylle and the said Prior graunteth
Alysandre at his comynge unto the Oxyloctches Cuphoches any Appendy in his Joynge aboute /
Holde and graunteth that if he be lettyde of his fferme aforsaid at any tme aboue expressed by
that he shall be leefull unto the forsaid Prior or his Successours in the forsaid Tenement
to Distreyne and the Distresse so to leye and withholde unto the tyme the said fferme for
be / be fully contented and satisfied / And if so be no Distresse be leefull duringe the said
the said Prior or his Successours into the said Tenement to entre and to have hit in his

Plate VI

A PAGE OF "WISDOM," ABOUT 1460

The other p(ar)te y[t] ys clepyde resone
Ande y[t] ys y[e] ymage of gode [1] p(ro)pyrly
ffor by y[t] y[e] sowll(e), of gode hathe conyc(i)on(e) [2]
And be y[t] hym s(er)wyt [3] & louevyt [4] duly
Be y[e] neyther p(ar)te of reson he knowyt dyscretly
All erthely thyng(s) how y[ey] xall [5] be vsyde
Wat suffysyth to hys myght(s) bodely [6]
Ande wat nedyt [7] not to be refusyde
Thes tweyn(e) do sygnyfye
yow[r] dysgysynge & yow[r] A ray [8]
Blake & wyght(e) fowll(e) & fayer vereyly
Eu[r]y sowll(e) her(e) y[is] ys no nay [9]
Blake by sterynge of synne y[t] [10] cum(m)yth all d[ay
Wyche felynge cum(m)ythe of sensualyte
Ande wyght(e) by knowenge of reson veray
Off y[e] blyssyde infenyt deyte [11]
Thus a sowle ys bothe fowlle & fayer
ffowll(e) as a best [12] be [13] felynge of synne
ffayer as a Angell(e) of hewy(n) [14] y[e] Ayer [15]
By knowynge of gode by hys reson(e) w[t] in [16]

[Aia [17]

Than may i sey thus & be gynne [18]
w[t] v.[19] prudent vyrgyns of my reme [20]
Then be y[e]. v wytt(s) of my sowll w[t] ime [21]
Nigra su(m) s3 [22] formosa filia jerusale(m)

[1] God [2] knowledge [3] serveth [4] loveth [5] they shall [6] bodily [7] needeth
[8] array (dress) [9] denying [10] that [11] deity [12] beast [13] by [14] heaven [15] heir
[16] within [17] *Anima* [18] begin [19] with five [20] realm [21] *sic*, within [22] *sed*

the other p̄te yᵗ yᵒ oldeyde ꝑsons
and yᵗ yᵒ yᵉ ymage of gode ffyrst by
ffor by yᵗ yᵉ solott. of gode hathe comycon
and be yᵗ hym ſhowt & knowyt duly
Alſo yᵉ noythor p̄te of ꝑsow he knowyt dyſcretly
Alt ordynly requyrſ how yᵒ yall be ruled
wat ſuffyſyth to hyr mygtt bodely
And wat nodyt not to be ꝑfuſyd
the twoyn be ſyenyſy
yow² dyſeyſyng & yow² a nay
Of take & nogtt forott & fayer vorely
And ſowtt hyr yᵉ yᵒ no nay
Of take by ſeyng of ſyme yᵗ cumyth alt be
wythe ſelyng cumyth of ſondyly to
And wyttt by knowng of ꝑsow vray
Off yᵉ blyſſyd mſoyt doyte
the no a ſowle yᵒ bothe ſowlle & fayer
ffowtt ao a beſt be ſelyng of ſyme
ffayer ao a angott of hevyn yᵉ dyer
Of yᵉ knowyng of gode by hyr ꝑsow wᵗ m

---

thand mdy i ſay the & be eyme
wᵗ v. prudent tyrſyne of my ꝑsone
thore be yᵉ. v wyth of my ſowtt wᵗ me
ſtrid ſw ſi formoſa filia ieruſalē

Plate VII

A PAGE OF "JONATHAS THE JEW," BETWEEN 1450 AND 1500

Syr Arystory [1] ys my name
a merchan(n)te myghty of a royall araye
fful wyde in yis worlde spryngyth my fame
fer(e) [2] kend & knowen ye sothe for to saye
In All man(er) of londs w(i)t(h)out ony naye [3]
My m(e)rchandyse renneth ye sothe for to tell
In gene [4] & in Jenyse & in genewaye [4]
In furgery [5] & in Saby [6] & in Salern(e) I sell
In Antyoche & in Almayn(e) [7] I [8] moch ys my myght
In braban [9] & in brytayn(e) I am full bold
coleyn yr [11] ryng(s) [12] I full ryght
In Calabre & in [demark be the chyffs cold [10]]
In Dordrede [13] & in de(n)mark be ye chyff(s) cold [10]
In Alysander [14] I haue abu(n)dawse in the wyde world
In france & in farre [15] fresshe be my flower
In glydre [16] & in Calys [17] haue I bowght & sold
holond
In Hamborowgh(e) [18] & in [Jherico] amoch [19] m(e)rchantdyse ys owr(s)
In Jerusalem & in Jherico a mo(n)g the Jewes Jentle
A mog [20] the caldeys [21] & Cattlyngs [22] kend ys my komyng
In raynes [23] & in rome to seynt petyrs temple
I am knowen certenly for bying & sellyng
In mayne & in melan(e) full mery haue I ben
owt of navern(e) [24] to naples moch good [25] ys y[t] I bryng
In ponder(e) & in portyngale moche ys my gle
In spayne & in spruc(e) [26] moche ys my spedyng [27]
In lombardy & in lachborn(e) [28] there ledde [29] ys my lykyng
In taryfe [30] & in turkey there told ys my tale
And in y[e] dukedo(me) of oryon [31] moche have I in weldyng [32]
And thus thorowght [33] all y[is] world sett ys my sale

[1] Aristorius [2] far [3] denial [4] Genoa [5] Error for "Surrey"? [6] Sabe (in Arabia) [7] Germany [8] ay (probably an error) [9] Brabant [10] Perhaps "told" (tolled) [11] there [12] range, wander [13] Dordrecht [14] Alexandria [15] Faröe (?) [16] Gelderland [17] Calais [18] Hamburg [19] Error for "moch" (much) [20] among [21] Chaldees [22] Catalauni (in Luxemburg) [23] Rheims [24] Navarre [25] merchandise [26] Prussia [27] success [28] Luxemburg [29] led [30] Tarifa [31] Oregon [32] wielding [33] throughout

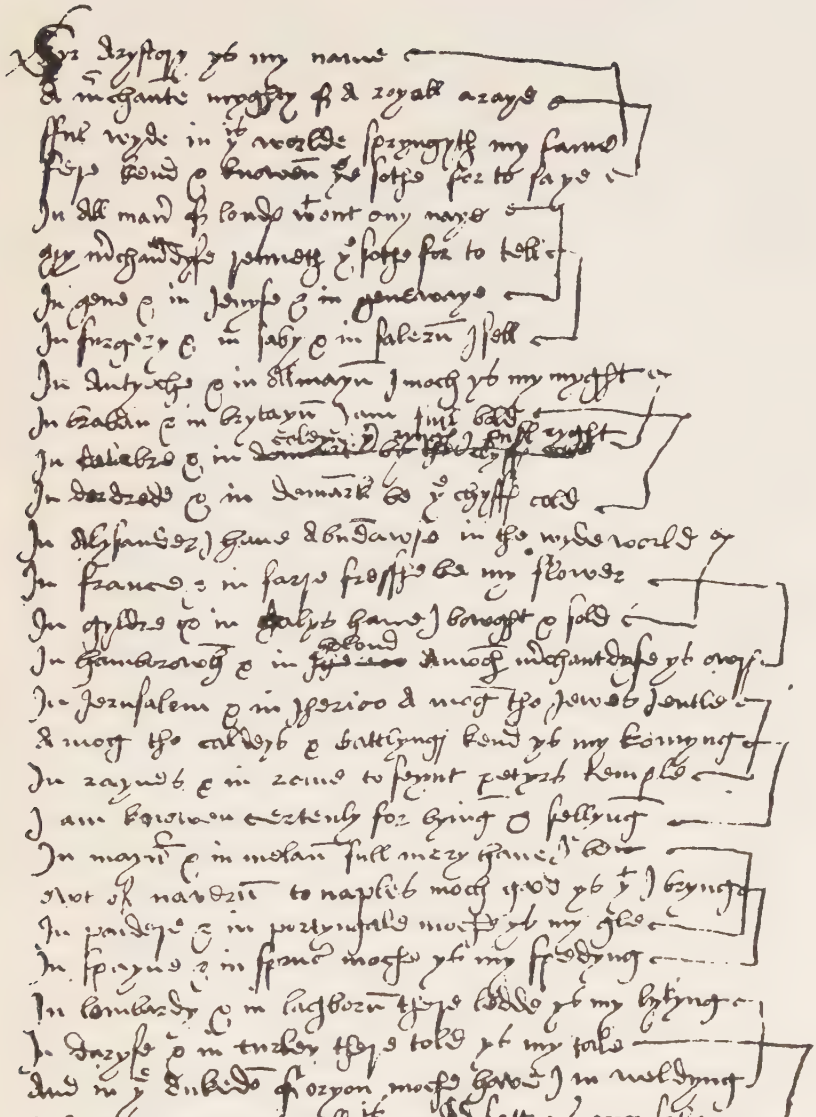

Plate VIII

PART OF A PAGE OF "MANKIND," ABOUT 1475

A lac [1] a lac ven(e) [2] ven(e) cu(m) hether w[t] Sorowe
pesse [3] fayer babys ye xall [4] haue a nappyll [5] to morow
Why grete ye so why

——— Neu[g [6]

A lasse [7] mast(er) alasse my p(ri)vyte

——— Mysch[eff

A wher a lake [1] fayer babe ba me
Abyde to son(e) J xall yt se

——— Nowad[ays

her(e) her(e) se my hede [8] goode mast(er)

——— Myscheff

lady helpe sely [9] darlynge ven(e) ven(e)
J xall helpe y[e] of y[i] [10] peyn(e)
J xall smytt of y[i] hede & sett yt one [11] agayn(e)

——— Nought

By ow[r] lady s(r) a fayer [12] playst(er)
Wyll ye of w[t] hys hede yt ys a schreude charme
As for me J haue non(e) harme
J wer(e) loth to forber(e) myne arme
Y[e] pley in no(m)i(n)e p(at)ris choppe

——— Neug[yse

Y[e] xall not choppe my jewellys & J may

——— Nowads

Y[e] crast(s) [13] crose wyll ye smyght my hede awey
Ther wher on(e) & on(e) oute ye xall not assay
J myght well be callyde a foppe

——— Myscheff

J kan(e) [14] choppe yt of & make yt agayn(e)

——— Newgyse

J hade a schreude recu(m)be(n)tib(us) but J fele no peyn(e)

——— Now [a days

ande my hede ys all saue [15] & holl agayn(e)
Now towchynge y[e] mater of ma(n)kynde
lett us haue an(e) interleccyon(e) sythe ye be cu(m) hether(e)
yt wer(e) goode to haue an(e) ende.

——— Myscheff

how how a mynstrell know ye ony ont [16]

——— Nought

I kan pype in a walsyngh(a)m Wystyll J nought Nou[ght

——— [Nought

Blow a pase [17] & y[u] xall bryng(e) hym(e) in w[t] a flewte

[1] Alack [2] *vene* (come) [3] peace [4] shall [5] an apple [6] New Guise (the name of the next speaker) [7] Alas [8] head [9] silly [10] thy [11] on [12] fair [13] Christ's [14] can [15] safe [16] of it [17] apace

A fader A fader vnder vnder — ye holy ghost to forgyue
me all my fader & moder I shall ask mercy
A passe mary A passe my lyttyl
A wyfe A fader fader & moder ye me
A dere to sone I shall yt se
Now ye wel se my good good maste —— Nowell
fader ye holy ghost vnder vnder —— Welcome
I shall ye of ye holy ghost —— Nought
I shall swyft of ye good & sett it ow a gayn
Ey ow fader & moder ye
wyll ye of us ony thyng yt ye shall ——
do for me I shall now gayne
fader pray to for me myn dame
ye pray in non other —— None
ye shall not chose my swetyll & myn Welcome
ye shall chose yt wyll ye swyght my good & wyf
after wyf and ow ouer ye shall not assay
I wyght nott be called a fole
I saw chose yt of a mayd yt a gayn —— Welcome
I was a schrewd gossyp but I sold no pyg —— Now
and my good ye shall saue & gett a gayn
Now touchyng ye matter of mayd
gett vs ye and dw mayd ye shall ye do ow good
yt vs good to ye and dw ouer.
Now now a mynstrell ouer ye ow ouer —— Welcome
I saw yll in a wyldyrnes wyght I no wyght Nought
ye shall & yt ye shall ouer ye ow a fedrys

Plate IX

PART OF A PAGE OF "WIT AND SCIENCE," ABOUT 1550

honest recre acion — nay syr as for bassys [1]
from hence none passys [2]
but as in gage
of mary age [3]

---

wyt — mary evyn so
a bargayne lo

---

honest recre acion — what wythout lysence
of ladye science

---

wyt — shall J tell you trothe
J never lovde her

---

honest recre / acion / — the com(m)on voyce goth
that mariage yemovd [4] her

---

wyt / — promyse hath she none
yf we shalbe [5] wone
wythout mo [6] wurd(s) grawnt

---

honest recre / acion — what vpon this soodayne
then myghte ye playne
byd me avawnt
nay let me see
in honeste
what ye can doo
to wyn recreacion
vpon that probacion
J grawnt therto.

---

wyt — small be my dooing(s)
but apt to all thyng(s)
J am J trust

---

honest recreacio can ye dawnce than [7]

---

wyt — evyn as J can
prove me [J] ye must

---

[1] basses [2] passes [3] marriage [4] you moved [5] shall be [6] more [7] then

Constructions — nay syr ab for bassyb
fr. ch. gence nonexassyb
that ab in grace
of mary age

Wyf — mary even so
a bargayne to

Constructions — what wythout thy sonne
ab lady & frience

Wyf — shall I tell yon truely
I never coude yet

Constructions — the comon voyce goth
that mariage yeniobdyen

Wyf — promyse hath no none
vs we shalbe woone
wythout mawmedyvalent

Constructions — what woon the sodayne
hen myght to ye playne
byd me avoyd
nay tarry me
in honeste
what ye can doo
for my recreation
wyth that vocation
I gyve it yerto

Wyf — small be my doings
but ayde to all thynges
I am I trust

Constructions — can ye dalaunce than

Wyf — even ab I can
wore me I ye must

Plate X

PART OF A PERSONAL ACCOUNT, 1553

Dewe to Symon lowe, of M^r^ Pickrelle the xxviij day of octobar i55i
Jt(e)m to M^rs^ bowlton these p(ar)sell(s) fowloinge [1]/ fyrst/
Jt(e)m a yarde q(uar)^tr^ of blacke luk(s) [2] veluet/ at xx^s^ y^e^ ya^r^de xxv^s^
Jt(e)m more to M^r^ Rychard Pyckrell the xxiij of Jvne an^o^ i552
Jt(e)m a y^r^ade [3] d(imidium) [4] q(uar)^tr^ of fyne blacke veluet/ at xvii/^s^ vj^d^– xx^s^ x^d^ ob [5]
Jt(e)m a q(uar)^tr^ & iij nayles of fyne blacke satten/ at xij^s^–v^s^ iij^d^
Jt(e)m payd to M^r^ Doctor Coke for halfe a yeres Rent dewe at mychaelmas/ in ano domene 1553 ——— xl^s^
Jt(e)m a Rest of monye Lente ——— x^li^
Sum(a) t(otalis) xv^li^ ij^s^ j^d^ ob [5] Wherof

[1] following [2] luxe [3] yard [4] half [5] obolus (halfpenny)

Plate XI

PART OF A PAGE OF "WIT AND WISDOM," 1579

Idlenis	Marry to goe amuming [1]
Wit	yea but what art thou may not that be knowen
Idlenis	why what am I but a knaue when all my mony is gone
Wit	come tell me thy name I pray the [2] haue done
Idlenis	A good honest knaues haue ye forgot so sone
Wit	why but will ye not tell me how thou camest thus drest
Idlenis	In faith gentell theaues you yo^{r} selues knowes bes[t
Wit	doe I why thou dost not [know me the [3] whorson patch
Idlenis	yes I knowe it is ether [4] snatch or Cat^{c}h But in faith [gentell theues

[1] mumming [2] thee [3] Error for "thou" [4] either

Fidelis } Marry to yor dammnacy

Wit } yea but what art thou
may not that be known

Fidelis } why what am I but a knave
when all my mary is gone

Wit } some tell me thy name
I pray thee honest dame

Fidelis } O good honest knave
have ye forgot Sr Dame

Wit } why but talk ye not to me
how thou camest thy self

Fidelis } Sir faith gentell Wranob
you yo Sherob knowst boy

Wit } doo I why thou dost not
thy welcome water

Fidelis } yet I know it is otherwise
Shatter or Batt
Shut in Tart

Plate XII

PART OF A PAGE OF HARINGTON'S "ORLANDO FURIOSO," ABOUT 1590

75

Now as Astolfo by those regions past,
he asked many questyons of his guyd,
and as he on ton [1] syde his ey did cast, .bladders,
a wondrows hill of [potsheads] bladders [2] he espyde.
and hee was told, they had been in tyme past,
the pompows crowns, and scepters [voyd of] full of pryde
of Monarks of Assyria, and of Greece,
of which now skintly [3] thear ys left a peece.

76

Hee saw great store of bayted hookes with gold,
and those wear guyfts that foolysh men prepard,
to gyve to princes covetows and old,
with fondest hope, of future vayn reward. /
then wear theyr rops,[4] all in sweet garlands rold,
and those wear all fallse flatteryes, he hard.[5]
then hard he cryckets songs, lyke to the [reh] verses,
the sarvant in his masters prayse reherses.

77

Thear did hee see fond loves that men pursew,
looking lyke golden gyves, with stons all set.
then things lyke eagles talents [6] he did vew,
those offyces that favorytes do gett,
then saw he bellows large, that much wynd blew,
large promyses, that lords make, and forget
vnto theyr Ganymeds, in flower of yowth:
but after nowght but beggery insewth. /

78

Hee saw great cytyes seated in fayr places,
that overthrown quyte topsy turvy stood,
hee askt, and learnd the cawse of theyr defaces,
was treson, that doth never turn to good.
hee saw fowl sarpents, with fayr womens faces,
of coyners and of theeves - - - - - - - y^e^ cursed brood;
he saw fyne glasses, all in peeces broken, [in peeces broken] [7]
of sarvyce lost in cowrt a wofull token. /

[1] the one [2] interlined [3] scantly [4] ropes [5] heard [6] talons [7] Repeated accidentally and deleted

Now we Astolfo by thoſe regions paſt,
he aſkes many queſtions of his guyde.
and at yet on ten dayes ryde he raſt. . bladders,
a woondrous hill of ~~gathered~~ he eſpyde.
and hee was told, there had been in tyme paſt,
the pompous crowns, and ſcepters ~~regall~~ full of pryde
of Monarks of Aſſyria, and of Greece,
of which now ſcarcly there ys left a peece.

76

Hee ſaw great ſtore of braſted hookes with yoke,
and thoſe, wear gryffes that feebleſt men purſued,
to gyve to princes rebellions and oke,
with fondeſt hope, of future boyes reward.
there wear theyr vayes, all in ſweet garlands roll,
and thoſe wear all fallſt flatterye. he fownd.
then fand he angelicke ſongs, lyke to the ſyrens ſweete,
the ſervant in his maſters prayſe rehearſe

77

There did he ſee ſond lovers that men purſue,
looking lyke golden gyves, with ſtones all ſet.
then thinges lyke tayles talentes he did veiw,
thoſe offered that favorytes do gett,
then ſaw he bellows large, that much wynd blew,
large promyſes, that lordes make, and forget
unto theyr Ganymedes, in flowr of youthe;
but after nought but beggery inſueth

78

Hee ſaw great cyties ſtaded in fayre playnes,
that overthrown ~~gryde~~ to duſt, every ſtead,
hee aſkt, and learnd the cauſe of theyr deſartes,
ſword treaſon, that doth never men to good.
Hee ſaw fowl ſhrynes, with fayre women ſtaynd,
of troyners and of theeves ~~~~~~~~~~ entred brood,
he ſaw fyne glaſſes, all in peeces broken, ~~imperial buckes~~
of ſhreyne loſt, in covert a woefull token. /

Plate XIII

PART OF A PAGE OF JOHN MANNINGHAM'S DIARY, 1601

Marche. 1601

11. 1 Sergeant Yeluerton and Serg. Heale beinge vpon a
tyme in the Companie of gent^{n}. w^{ch} were merryly disposed
Yeluerton began to take exception against Heale
that he went noe oftner then once by the yeare, to
pay his wife hir duty /. Heale said that the gentmen
were fittest iudges in [such] this controuersie, and
therefore he would but put the case and referr it
to them. / . yf a man be to pay you a good round
sũme whether had you rather receiue it by driblets
or the whole togither. / After the gent had strayned
courtesie whoe should breake silence, at last one
of them. / made him this answere / Lett me be
paid as I neede it / . / . M^{r}. B Curle / . / ..

---

13 1. W: Watts and ch: Danvers had fiery wordes / . /
Cõmonly those w^{oh} speake most against Tullio
are like a dog, w^{oh} cõming into a roome where
he espies a shoulder of mutton lying vpon some
high place, falls to barking at it, because he
cannot reache it / . / Watts /.

Vpon a tyme when Burbidge played Rich. 3.
there was a Citisen goene soe farr in liking
wth him, that before shee went from the play
shee appointed him to come that night vnto
her by the name of Ri: / the 3. / / / Shakespeare
ouerhearing their conclusion, went before, was
intertained, and at his game ere Burbidge
came / . / Then message being brought that Rich.
the 3d. was at the dore. / Shakespeare causd returne
to be made that William the Conquerour
was before Rich. the 3 / . / / Shakespeares name Wllm

---

ma Curle: /

March · 1601 ·

11 · / Sergeant Yelverton / and Serj: Hoale beinge upon w
hym in the companie of gent: wch were moved to dissw
Yelverton began to labo: perswasion against Hoale
that he were not offence then one of the Yeo: to
pay his rise for duty /. Hoale said that he gentlem
were first myght in that kid. reckoned the and
therefore he would but pay his rate and no
he then /. Yes a man be he pay you a good round
sume wch he did you rather reckon it by dribbly
or he wch wither / after he gone that stayed
reckoned wch and Hoale Yelverton, at last one
of them / made him kid answere wch he
paid 12 d made it /. / M^r. Secretary /.

---

13 / M: walter and Sr. Dauncy and Serj woodd /. /

Comonly hoste (wch) Hoale (most against Tullies
here like) to day, wch my mynd (into a roome where
he dyned a sowdersse mutton kynge upon some
litle plates, shall be barbing at il besides he
ran most roasse it /. / walter.

Upon a hyme upon Burbidge played Rich. 3.
how wch a vilyon stood he sate in sitting
duty him, that before soo were from he play
soe happened him to come that myght had
sid by the name of Richard 3. / Shakespeare
overhearing their resolution, went before, wch
misliked, and it sid going out Burbidge
name (a upon mes) hyre being brought that Rich
he 3d was at the doore, Shakespeare rapped returne
to be made that William the Conqueror
was before King. the 3. / Shakespeare answered with
mu Tarq /.

Plate XIV

PART OF A PAGE OF "TWO NOBLE LADIES," EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

with all thy pow'r against this Babilon.
Sacke mee this Cittie, leaue not a tow'r vncast;
revenge mee on this Califfe, race [1] his name
out of the royall list of Kings.

Califfe. Art madde?
thou shalt not free him.

Clitophon. Hee's my prisoner,
and Ile dispose of him.

Souldan. Is this my ransome?

Clitophon. This only.

Souldan. By the solemne oath I tooke
thy wish shall be effected; tyrant, now
[remember] thinke on a footstooles place, 'tis [?no] thy tur

Califfe. Shall we so loose him? [Kill him] Souldiers, kill him first.

Clitophon. who ere [2] resist the Souldans passage, this *his sword.*
shall be theyr passe to hell.

Miranda. happy dissention
that free's my royall father from base thrall. *asside.*

Souldan. Califfe farewell; adue braue Clitophon;
thanckes for this noble kinde condition. *Exit Souldan.*

Clitophon. Depart in peace, and keep thy promise Souldan.

Califfe. Vngracious youth, what has thy madnesse done?
fetch backe the Souldan, or by all the gods
Ile curse thee, disinherit thee of raigne;
and —

Clitophon. Tush, distribute thy inheritance,
give me instead of it thy cruell curse;
Thou hast depriv'd me of my l[ife]oue,[3] thats worse.
ffarewell vnworthy of so kinde a sonne,
farewell my countrey, frends and all farewell,
farewell good Arundan, braue gentleman;
farewell my souldiers; for Iuslina's losse
farewell all ioy: greife-conquerd I depart
leauing my fortunes here with her my hart. *Exit.*

Califfe. Stay *Clitophon*, forget not duty thus.

Miranda. had you remembred mercie to [your] his [4] loue,
you had prevented this ill threatning anger.

Califfe. Wretched'st of men! Lords call him backe againe.
The Souldiers drop away.

[1] erase [2] e'er [3] *oue* interlined [4] interlined

with all thy power against this Babilon.
Barke me this Cittie, leaue not a towre vnrazd
vengeance on this Califfe, vanish his name
out of the roy all list of Kings
Califfe. Art mad?
thou shalt not haue him.
Clitophon. How's my Prisoner,
and I dispossest of him?
Souldan. Is this my ransome?
Clitophon. This only.
Souldan. By the solemne oath I tooke
thy wife shall be offerd; be vaunt, auoy
thinke on a footstoole plant, this thy
Califfe. Shall we so loose him? Souldiers, kill him first.
Clitophon. why auoydst the Souldans passage. this [this word.]
shall be thy passe to hell.
Miranda. Happy dissolution
that frees my royall father from Bassa thrall. [ayde.]
Souldan. Califfe farewell; adue braue Clitophon;
thanks for this noble kind renditon. [Exit Souldan.
Clitophon. I depart in peace, and keep the promist Souldan.
Califfe. Vngratious youth, what hath the mad wrought?
false Barka the Souldan, or by all the gods
I'le nurse the woe, this spirit threw of vengeance;
and —
Clitophon. Tush, distributo thy in feritance,
giue me in stead of it thy rude rusty;
Thou hast deprivd me of my [illegible] hath worse.
farewell vnworthy of so kinde a sonne,
farewell my brothers, friends and all farewell,
farewell good Arundan, braue gentleman;
farewell my Souldiers; for Sufinah losse
farewell all ioy: griefe rankord I depart
Leaning my fortune good with thee my heart. [Exit
Califfe. Stay Clitophon, forgot not duty thou.
Miranda. Had you remembred mercie to this loue,
you had preuented this ill threatning angor.
Califfe. Vntrayd'st of men! Lords call him backe againe.
[The Souldiers drop away.

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